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BEING 'NOBODIES': SCHOOL REGIMES AND STUDENT IDENTITIES IN GHANA

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Akpe.

DEDICATION

Essey Adzahlie-Mensah

Etor Adzahlie-Mensah

Evelyn Hlordzi

This may never repay what you sacrificed for it.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADP	Accelerated Development Plan
CADF	Critical Anti-colonial Discursive Framework
CAP	Capitation Grant Programme
CHRAJ	Commission of Human Rights and Administrative Justice
CREATE	Consortium for Research into Educational Access, Transitions and Equity
DFID	Department for International Development
EFA	Education for All
ECM	Extended Case Method
FCUBE	Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education
FSU	Free School Uniforms
GES	Ghana Education Service
GPI	Gender Parity Index
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KG	Kindergarten
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOESS	Ministry of Education, Science and Sports
MOEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
NALAP	National Literacy Acceleration Programme
NER	Net Enrolment Ratio
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
PTAs	Parent Teacher Associations
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SFP	School Feeding Programme
SMCs	School Management Committees
UBC	Universal Basic Completion
UBE	Universal Basic Education
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Social and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPC	Universal Primary Completion
WHO	World Health Organisation

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY****BEING 'NOBODIES': SCHOOL REGIMES AND STUDENT IDENTITIES IN GHANA****SUMMARY**

What do we know about student experiences and perspectives of schooling in developing country contexts that are relevant to the 'big debates' concerning Education for All (EFA)? This study, *Being 'Nobodies': School Regimes and Student Identities in Ghana*, speaks to the question I pose. It explores the in-school experiences and identities of fifteen students in a rural Ghanaian Basic School using a critical anti-colonial discursive framework. The critical proposition underlying the study is that, aside from the longstanding problems we know of from research on schooling in developing countries, other problems "can be attributed to the dismal failure of the postcolonial state to change the existing system so that it reflects changing times, circumstances and social realities" (Dei, 2004:6).

Unlike the dominant positivistic 'etiology' of challenges to EFA, this school-based ethnographic case study provides strong evidence that persisting colonial school regimes – authoritarian forms of control and the reproduction of knowledge - are implicated in the educational experiences of students and the identities they negotiate within the institution. The three analysis chapters – Chapters Five, Six and Seven – contribute to the wider literature on schooling by specifically exploring students' perspectives on school regimes and student identities. **Chapter Five** discusses schooling as control. It highlights the more formal institutional regimes (authoritarian school organisation, school timetable as a management tool and the school code of discipline) that organise student experiences of schooling. **Chapter Six** focuses on the reproduction of knowledge through the delivered curriculum and performance modes of teaching and learning. **Chapter Seven** explores identities that students develop in relation to the practices discussed in Chapter Five and Chapter Six. It highlights that students see themselves as *being 'nobodies'* such that their 'best' agency is to use silence as an agentic 'voice'.

Despite Ghana's long attained independence, my thesis of the student identities of *being 'nobodies'* asserts that, there has been little critical review of bequeathed colonial school practices. By practices, I mean specifically: authoritarian organization; discipline forms; and, performance modes of knowledge production that position students as 'colonised subjects'. Based on the central analysis of this research, I recommend further research into the ways in which student experiences can inform the 'big debates' central to EFA.

CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW

1.1 Introduction

This thesis is the outcome of school-based ethnographic research located within a critical anti-colonial discursive framework (CADF). This epistemological orientation offers a critical space to examine and analyse discursively how school relations and knowledge production practices are structured to create meaning; and how everyday school practices are experienced by students – people distinctively located within the institution (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001). It addresses students as ‘colonised subjects’ by suggesting that school organisation, knowledge practices and language of instruction in developing countries tend to de-historicise students and uproot them from their cultural heritage as colonialism (Dei, 2004; Harber, 2004; Adjei, 2007; Agbenyegah, 2011).

From Ghana’s historical past (which I discuss further in Chapter Three), and intellectual history of schooling (see Chapter Two) the CADF is useful – not necessarily in terms of exploring continuing foreign colonialism but the institutional regimes of power, knowledge practices and student identities in school (Adjei, 2007; Agbenyega, 2011). In terms of contextual relevance, a key advocate of the CADF – George Joseph Sefa Dei who is a Ghanaian - insists that the framework provides a pathway to decolonising education, which implies reclaiming Indigenous cultures, languages, values, and worldviews and re-positioning them as an integral part of the education system (Dei 2004; Adjei, 2007). My aim of using the CADF is to understand Ghana’s disengagement from colonial experiences of schooling and what we can learn from it to inform the ‘big debates’ central to achieving Education for All (EFA) and universal primary completion (UPC).

Those who have read much of the quantification research in Ghana, and are accustomed to reading about Ghana’s progress towards achieving EFA goals, might be disappointed reading the data I presented in the analysis chapters. The results present a bleak but pleasantly honest perspective on school regimes and students’ identities of

being nobodies. Unlike the dominant positivistic ‘etiology’ of challenges to EFA, this school-based ethnographic case study provides strong evidence that persisting colonial school regimes – authoritarian forms of control and the reproduction of knowledge are implicated in the educational experiences of students and the identities they negotiate within the institution.

I suggest that, despite the political rhetoric of the 1950s; the ambitious legislative processes and the attempt to reconstruct colonial school legacies and the numerous education reforms implemented over the years, Ghana’s school system reflects little departure from colonial systems of thought, which hitherto invalidated indigenous knowledge, language, and identities (Dei, 2000a, 2000b). Little has been done to challenge the political economy of knowledge production; to reclaim indigenous cultures, languages, values, and worldviews; and to re-position them as an integral part of the education system (Adjei, 2007). Legacies of colonial schooling practices remain entrenched in school policy and persist in practices. Despite Ghana’s political democratic progress, little has changed in terms of the inherited colonial school’s system of authoritarian organization; discipline forms; and, performance modes of knowledge production that position students as ‘colonised subjects’.

I am publishing the data in this research as an honest admission of the violence we perpetrate against children, and against ‘ourselves’ as a society, through the school system. Being Ghanaian, I should ‘cover up’ my ‘national shame’ by publishing something else that continues the pattern of functionalist research in Ghana that often resists critical discussion of the relationship between education and development. I am a product of the Ghanaian school system; I have lived and worked as a teacher and a researcher (in both rural and urban schools) in Ghana. In this thesis’ research process, I have had to reflect on these personal experiences – as a product of the Ghanaian school system, a teacher and as a researcher - and crosscheck some of what I was observing, and or, was being told. Upon this wealth of experience (accumulated over my 38 years of existence as a Ghanaian), I doubt if similar research in ‘other’ rural schools can significantly contradict the knowledge generated through this study.

Although it is foolhardy to make monolithic universalising policy recommendations based on a limited school-based study, I built on the findings of this research to make some policy claims and recommendations. The findings speak to the imperative for a critical review of school policies, ruling relations and knowledge practices to address the lingering effects of coloniality; as part of the steps towards promoting educational uptake; and, to make schools child-friendly institutions that support and nurture potential.

1.2 Rationale

The critical proposition underlying this study is that, aside from the longstanding problems we know of from research on schooling in developing countries, other problems “can be attributed to the dismal failure of the postcolonial state to change the existing system so that it reflects changing times, circumstances and social realities” (Dei, 2004:6). It departs from the pattern of global discussions which concentrate on positivistic ‘etiology’ of schooling (Schultz, 1971; Smith, 1976; Cochrane et al., 1980; Lockheed et al., 1980). It sallies away from dominant functionalist studies although it recognizes the potential of schooling to improve human capital, demographic transition, preventive health care and reductions in inequality (Lockheed et al., 1980; Cochrane et al., 1980; Streeten, 1999; Sen, 1999; Lewin, 2007; Lewin, 2009; MOESS, 2008).

For me, departure from positivistic functionalist analysis was necessary for several reasons. Despite EFA policies demanding that education is “means blind” or fee-free (Lewin, 2007:3) and global statistics (currently 2,990,70 children in school by 2010), dropout rates in many developing countries are greater than 30 percent (UNESCO, 2012). Although research projects have generated much knowledge on educational problems, achieving UPC seemed perplexing and elusive in developing countries, including Ghana (e.g. Colclough et al., 2003; Dei, 2004; Dunne et al., 2005a; Akyeampong et al., 2007; Lewin, 2007, 2009). The question of access has become more puzzling as the work of CREATE called attention to several forms of exclusion including ‘silent exclusion’, which suggests that many students remain in school without

any meaningful participation (Akyeampong et al., 2007; Lewin, 2009). Regardless of constitutional obligations to provide education for all; decentralisation of educational administration and community participation through PTAs and SMCs as well as implementations of special schemes for girls; the literature suggests that many developing countries including Ghana are not on track to achieve UPC (Boyle et al., 2002; Rose, 2003; Dei, 2004; Pryor, 2005; De Grauwe et al., 2005; Akyeampong et al., 2007; Lewin, 2009; UNESCO, 2012).

In this study I draw from the now classical works of Fanon (1963), Nyerere (1967), Holt (1969), Postman and Weingartner (1969), Illich (1971), Freire (1972) and Foucault (1977) to question simplistic assumptions of formal education (schooling) as an opening process. This implies turning to propositions that critique uncritical expansion of schooling in developing countries (Said, 1978; Foucault, 1995; Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001; Tikly, 2004; Dei, 2006; Dunne et al., 2007; UNESCO, 2007). It also implies taking the view of schooling, in developing countries, as a colonial relic replete with discursive violence (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001). It also requires that schools are considered as inhabiting 'colonial' (imposed and dominating) practices – authoritarian modes of control and surveillance, irrelevant curriculum due to de-legitimation of indigenous knowledge and language (Dei, 2004; Harber, 2004). From such literature we know that schools are a site of struggle and;

the global resistance of the dominant authoritarian model suggests that the original purpose of control and compliance is deeply embedded in schooling and is highly resistant to change as a result (Harber, 2004:59).

As such, this study takes Foucault's view of schools as structures of domination where "existential meanings are negotiated dialogically" (Christians, 2005:151). This critical framework views schools as systems of control that help maintain existing power relationships, inequality and identities (Foucault, 1977, Dei, 2004). Students are positioned as "those most affected by educational policy and programmatic decisions" but whose experiences are absent from inquiry (Marshall & Rossman, 1999:115). Unlike the dominant positivistic analysis of challenges to EFA, I explored students' experiences - encounters with social practices, regulation and social positioning in

school - primarily for the potential that their perspectives can add substantial knowledge to what we know about schooling. It was important for me to research students' experiences because I sought to study an area which has the potential to inform policy and practice. In doing so, I conducted a nuanced analysis by addressing the deficits that often emerge from large scale positivistic studies. Accordingly, this thesis adopts an institutional ethnography approach where analysis is grounded in a more detailed understanding of school policy and social relations. From a critical anti-colonial tradition, I explored schooling as a system of control, the reproduction of knowledge and the social positioning of students within the institution.

1.3 Country overview

The thesis' research happened in a rural Ghanaian Basic school. Ghana is a secular democratic state located in West Africa. The country has a population of 25 million, a GDP growth of 5.7% and per capita income of \$2,500. Ghana shares borders with Burkina Faso in the north, Togo in the East, Cote d'Ivoire in the West and the Gulf of Guinea at the south as depicted in the map below.

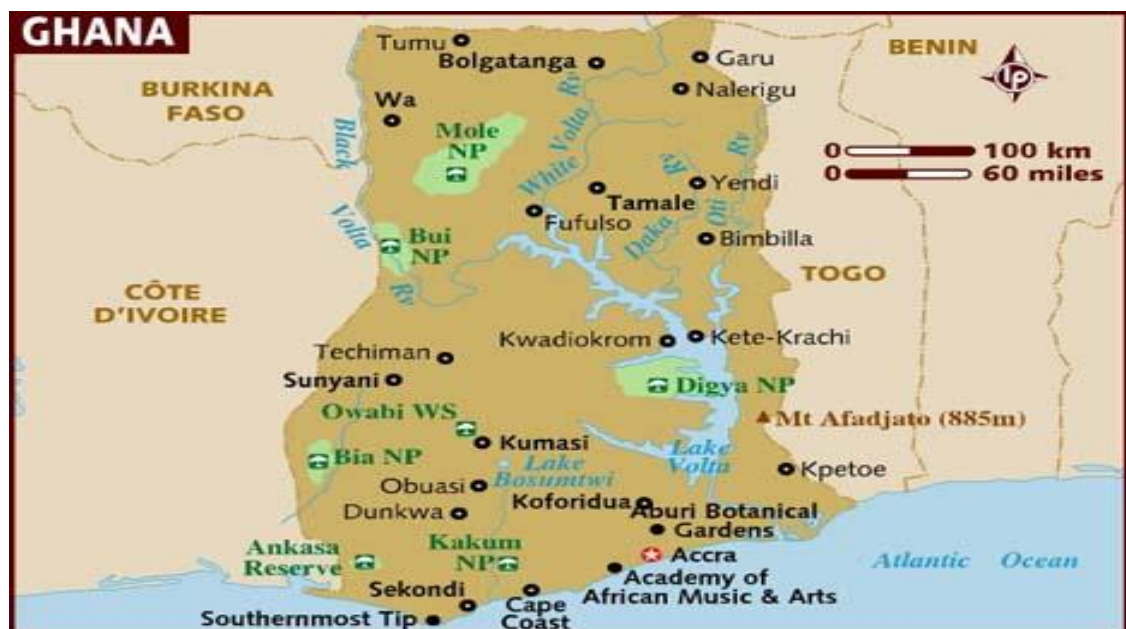


Figure 1.1 Map of Ghana (credit - <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/maps/africa/ghana/>)

The country is one of the creations of the partitioning of Africa resulting from the European scramble for colonies in the 1800s. Ghana was involved in the 15th century trade with Europeans because of its vast gold reserves and later became a major European slave raiding and trading post. It is estimated that nineteen percent (19%) of the about 10 million slaves from Africa between 1500 and 1870 came from Ghana. The British administered the country as a colonial enclave for 207 years - from the British Royal African Company administration (1750-1842) to Britain's direct control (1843-1957). Under colonialism, laws, mostly based on the English legal and normative standards, were made by a British governor and an all-European executive and legislative council (Ellis, 1971; GoldSchmidt, 1981). English system of thought and British colonial ethics permeated and significantly modified every aspect of Ghanaian life (Ebe, 1993; Graham, 1971).

Formal schooling in Ghana is an “intellectual borrowing from Europe” (Sanjinés, 2007:300). Following the pioneering work of European missionaries and merchants, who introduced schooling to educate the sons and daughters of colonial government staff at castles and later to foster religious conversion, the British colonial administration developed the formal school system (Amedahe & Chandramohan, 2009:7).

All lessons from kindergarten to university are taught in English. The indigenous languages are studied as second languages in schools. The literacy rate stands at 82.7% for males and 67.1% for females (Salifu & Agbenyega, 2012).

The development of curriculum, assessment, training and posting of teachers is administered centrally by the Ghana Education Service. The rules set in Ghanaian schools are mandated by the Ministry of Education through the Ghana Education Service Council. These rules constitute discipline codes in the school system.

Ghana's 1992 Constitution (Article 25) provides for 'free compulsory universal basic education' (FCUBE). Basic education in Ghana is defined as “the minimum formal education to which every Ghanaian child is entitled as a right, to equip him/her to

function effectively in society” (Anfom Report, 1986:9; Anamuah-Mensah, 2002). The Government White Paper (GOG, 2004) on the Education Reforms Review conducted in 2002 (Anamuah-Mensah, 2002) introduced a system of universal basic education comprising

- 1) 2 years of kindergarten;
- 2) 6 years of primary education; and
- 3) 3 years of Junior High School education

Pro-poor policies inspired by the MDG goal of achieving UPC by 2015 were introduced as part of efforts to achieving EFA. The Capitation Grant scheme CAP introduced in September 2005 abolished all school fees by providing block-grants to all schools based on enrolment and one textbook per child (and sometimes free exercise books). The pilot School Feeding Programme (SFP) introduced in 2006 provides one nutritious meal per child at lunch time. The Free School Uniforms programme introduced in 2009 aimed to ensure that no child is left out of school due to inability to purchase uniforms (MOE, 2011b). The combined effect of those initiatives was increased enrolment (Table 1.2), retention and attendance by children in most rural communities (CHRAJ, 2011; MOE, 2011b).

Table 1.1: National Performance of Access Indicator

Level	Indicator	2005/06	2006 /07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
PRIMARY	Total Enrolment	3,122,903	3,365,762	3,616,023	3,710,647	3,809,258	3,962,779	4,451,878
	GER	86.4%	90.8%	95.0%	94.9%	94.9%	96.4%	96.5%
	NER	68.8%	78.6%	82.9%	88.5%	83.6%	77.9%	81.7%
	Completion Rate	75.6%	85.4%	85.5%	86.3%	87.1%	91.6%	93.7%
JHS	Enrolment Total	1,121,887	1,132,318	1,224,010	1,285,577	1,301,940	1,335,400	1,434,211
	GER	70.4%	74.8%	78.8%	80.6%	79.5%	79.6%	80.6%
	NER	41.6%	50.7%	52.9%	47.8%	47.5%	46.1%	46.1%
	Completion Rate	77.9%	64.9%	67.70%	75.0%	66.0%	66.9%	66.8%

Source: Education Sector Annual Report, MOE (2013)

As may be observed from Table 1.1, total primary enrolment rose from 3,365,762 to 4,451,878 between 2005/06 and 2011/12. Gross enrolment ratio (GER) rose from 86.4% in 2005/6 to 96.5% in 2010/2011, showing an increase of 10.1%. The net enrolment ratio (NER) increased from 68.8% to 88.5% in 2008/9 before declining to 81.7%. Completion rates improved from 75.6% to 93.7% over the same period. The Gender Parity Index (GPI) has moved very close to one (1) as shown in Table 12 below:

Table 1.2: Gender Parity Index

GPI	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
KG	0.99	0.98	0.98	0.98
Primary	0.96	0.96	0.97	0.97
JHS	0.92	0.93	0.93	0.94

Source: Education Sector Annual Report, MOE (2012)

A gender strategy was being developed by the Girls Education Unit at the time of this research to address the deficits that affected the target of reaching gender parity in primary enrolment by 2012 (see MOE, 2012). Despite the appreciable gender parity and completion rates, reports suggest Ghana is “not on course” to meet MDG Goals by 2015 (Adamu-Issah et al., 2007; MOE, 2010, 2011a). The GER and NER are lower for rural districts where high rates of dropping out occur mostly between primary grades 1 and 4 (MOE, 2011:11).

Although much research has been done (e.g. Akyeampong et al., 2007; Dunne et al., 2010; Alhassan & Adzahlie-Mensah, 2010) the MOE (2010:23) explained that “further studies” are needed to understand why it is difficult to achieve UPC. For me, this echoes the argument of Dunne et al. (2010:4) that while the national statistics on access “are important indicators of national educational and development progress, they provide limited insight into the educational experiences of students in Ghana”. There are concerns that student experiences, the roles of difference and school power relations and identities remain largely unexplored (Dei, 2006; Adjei, 2007). Also, studies focus on critical interrogation of schooling to capture insights from participants at the school context (Dunne et al., 2010) and the epistemic effects of using English (foreign language) as the medium of instruction, its impact on classroom interaction and knowledge production are hard to find. Quartey (2007:7) argued that “spaces of exclusion and inclusion or boundaries of identification” in colonial Ghanaian schools persist but there is little empirical research on the nature of schools as social institutions. It is from this background that this research specifically explored students’ experiences of schooling. Students’ perspectives on school regulation, knowledge production processes and colonial absences such as the use of English (foreign language) as the medium of instruction and its epistemic effects are explored to add substantially to the literature on schooling in Ghana and beyond.

1.4 Conceptual formations

The research is premised in nominalist ontology and subjectivist epistemology. Nominalism and subjectivism reject essentialism and methodological minimalism: the

production of knowledge separate “from the local particularities and social contingencies ... of their production” which characteristically “objectifies people, simplifies the complexities and contingencies of social life” (Dunne, 2009:9). The research conceptualised *reality* (student experiences) as contextual and perspective bound (Usher, 1996; Bryman, 2004; Yin, 2009; Cohen et al., 2011). *Truth* is understood as a product of discursive formations including my interactions, writing descriptions and explications (Schostak, 2002).

The research approach is mainly qualitative and did not seek to develop a monolithic universalising theory. The case study school was conceptualised as a ‘field’ where students are brought (and brought up) within regimes of social conduct (Bourdieu, 1990; Smith, 2005). I used institutional ethnography which implied being drawn into dialogic studies of different dimensions – structural, social and cultural - of everyday school to deconstruct the local actualities: institutional hierarchies, student identities and the “regimes of colonialism” (Smith, 2005:9). The data were collected through interviewing, observing and critical examination of the textual basis of school discourse. The analyses involved thematic coding, drawing on membership categorisation and critical discourse analyses. The analysis chapters highlight students ‘voice’, sometimes quoting their comments verbatim, because I seek to challenge marginalities by bringing their perspectives to the fore.

The theoretical approach is a critical anti-colonial discursive framework which, sits uncomfortably with the notion of education as an *opening* process (Cohen et al., 2007:31). By an opening process, I mean considerations of education as an objective good, the main pathway to personal and national development. This theoretical approach rejects reductionism especially by raising critical questions about the political and ideological context of education research (Cohen et al., 2011) and, questioning how particular knowledges and identities are produced, reproduced or resisted (Dei, 2004). Rejecting reductionism also implied questioning how “dominant understandings of social phenomena have been historically produced through specific ... discourses of colonialism” (Dunne, 2009:10). The necessity of using the anti-colonial discursive

framework resided in persistent arguments that Ghana's school system is still dominated by colonial canon, worldview, and epistemology (Busia, 1964; Dei, 2004; Adjei, 2007).

From such anti-colonial premise, this research theorises schools as institutions inhabiting colonial power relations which have flourished "on the grounds of the silence of history" (Mignolo, 2002:67). By colonial power relations I mean systems of domination that promote particular norms of social organisation, behaviour, attitudes and knowledge (Foucault, 1971; Searle, 2005). I draw on Foucault's view of school spaces as social arenas deliberately designed for supervising, hierarchizing and rewarding, where power relations structure the distribution of students - over interactional time, over historical time (Ochs, 1993; Piro, 2008). In that continuum, power is exercised according to hierarchies that constrain and regulate students (Foucault, 1995). School relations are characterised by bureaucratic routines – constantly measuring, categorising, ordering, and regulating (Gore, 2001). The students located at the lowest pecking order are constantly watched, categorised and regulated to perform normalised behaviours (Adler & Adler, 1998; Harber, 2004). Schools spaces (such as classrooms) place limitations on discourse, and decisions about the use of space involve the regulation of bodies (Quijano, 2007). Such "imposition of norms" (Escobar, 2004:214) frames students' experiences of schooling and their consequent identity positioning.

Therefore, this research focused on uncovering students experiences by exploring what Foucault (1995:199) would refer to as "disciplinary partitioning" or regimes of power in schooling discourse – where discourse is understood as language and social practice (Dunne et al., 2005b). Central to the analysis is membership categorisation analysis of how disciplinary partitioning limited spaces for students to create constant threats of inspection, a surveillance that captures students in an overall field of visibility (Philo, 2010) and transformed their identities from being somebodies to being 'nobodies'. This involved a spatial ontology that examined "the relationship between the margin and the centre" (Giroux, 1993:185). Social practices within the case study

school were analysed in terms of the relationship that students have with their status, functions and activities within the institution (Foucault, 1986). Such ontology was useful for me to raise critical questions concerning how students' experiences are determined by institutional regimes and related identities "by deconstructing the colonialist and imperialist ideologies that structure ... social practices" (Giroux, 1993:185). Thus the research drew on Foucault's theory for its utility in enabling us to document *what causes students to become what they are* in schools (Gordon et al., 2000), the potential to deconstruct students' experiences and the promise to add substantial knowledge to what we know about schooling.

1.5 Terminology

The thesis draws on three main slippery concepts – coloniality, regimes of power and identities – which require clarification to establish their usage in the text.

Coloniality is used in this research as process of creating a space of stereotypes, boundaries and discourses with the attitude of suppression (de Sousa Santos, 2006). It encompasses the creation of a monoculture, activities that perpetuate conditions of power and inscribed homogeneity of knowledge without individual or contextual variation. Coloniality is also seen as "discursive violence" (Vasquez, 2009:1) that includes forms of control – control over knowledge (the coloniality of knowledge) and specific forms of dominating relations (coloniality of power) - that limit democratic engagements between teachers and students. The expressive effect of coloniality is the enactment of normalcy and its slipperiness to influence consciousness, identity and desire (Said, 1993; Escobar, 2007). It hinges on *ruling relations* (Smith, 2005) expressed in school regulation, which privileges particular people, knowledges and identities over others (de Sousa Santos, 2006).

Regimes of power is used in line with Foucault's (1977) theory of institutional power - including school regimes - as a set of discursive formations or outcomes of social geometries that operate from the body to the global by which particular groups or individuals might be differently privileged or disadvantaged. It includes institutional hierarchies and often invisible cultural regimes (Shapiro, 2003) framed with the

purpose to discipline bodies through norms – norms of behaviour, and, of knowledge (Gore, 2001). Regimes of power include control through normalised hierarchies of knowledge and authority structures that become surveillance mechanisms (vigilant eyes everywhere), and institutional pathologies by which students are classified and distributed in space. I conceptualised regimes of power as something that frames the relations among teachers and students in the construction of knowledge (Harber, 2004; Piro, 2008). Regimes of power are implicated in the production of and maintenance of identities because they are present in school policy, hierarchical positions, pedagogic relations and linguistic labels that privilege some members over others (Stoll & Fink, 2001; Mignolo, 2007).

Identities, in this thesis, follows social constructionists' understandings of doing, being or becoming (Butler, 1990; Nancy, 2000; du Gay, 2007). They are “contextual and relational, because *being* is always a *being-with*” (see Nancy, 2000:32). It relates to “how people conduct themselves as particular sorts of persons” contingent on “particular normative and technical regimes” (du Gay, 2007:11, 26). In this research, *identities* are contingent on school hierarchies and knowledge practices that are implicated in producing technologies of the *self* (Foucault, 1988). This social constructionist approach implies that identities are constructed within the existential conditions (institutional rules and deeds).

1.6 Structure of the thesis

The thesis is structured in eight chapters. Chapter One is an introduction, presenting an overview of the thesis. Chapter Two discusses the theoretical framework - my critical anti-colonial discursive framework, which analyses schooling in terms of persisting hierarchies of power and control over knowledge. Chapter Three explores education-development discourses in Ghana to put the research in context and highlights the gaps that informed this research.

The central concern of Chapter Four is the methodology and conceptual formations – ontological and epistemological – as well as the practical research methods and ethical

issues. The chapter describes the case study school and its characteristics, the research participants and the reflexive practices involved in the research.

The three analysis chapters – Chapters Five, Six and Seven – contribute to the wider literature on schooling by specifically exploring students' perspectives on school regimes and student identities. **Chapter Five** discusses schooling as control. It highlights the more formal institutional regimes (authoritarian school organisation, school timetable as a management tool and the school code of discipline) that organise student experiences of schooling. **Chapter Six** focuses on the reproduction of knowledge through the delivered curriculum and performance modes of teaching and learning. **Chapter Seven** explores identities that students develop in relation to the practices discussed in Chapter Five and Chapter Six. It highlights that students see themselves as *being 'nobodies'* such that their 'best' agency is to use silence as an agentic 'voice'.

The last Chapter (Chapter Eight) sums up the key findings and conclusions, reflections on the research, as well as the contributions of the thesis to knowledge and proposals for further studies.

CHAPTER TWO

EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the intellectual history behind education and development to fulfil a requirement that “the knowledge producer be aware of the historical and institutional structures and contexts that sustain intellectualism and intellectual projects on schooling” (Dei, 2004:262). The review is organised under four sub-themes. The first is an overview of education and development debates where I explore dominant theoretical discourses and their critiques. The second is a discussion of schooling in developing countries. This is followed by a discussion of regimes of power in school and the nature of schools as locations of identities.

2.2 Overview of Education and Development Debates around EFA

The critical role education plays in both individual and national development are widely acknowledged (Psacharopoulos & Woodhall, 1985; Asafu-Adjaye, 2012). Fasih (2008) asserts that countries with low levels of education run the risk of being trapped in technological stagnation and low growth. The research evidence from different developing countries over the decades indicates that investments in education engenders national manpower development for enhanced economic growth, personal employability, wages and productivity (Converse, 1972; Card, 1998; Schultz, 2007). Education is also identified with non-labour market outcomes such as general wellbeing - improved health, active participation in political processes and improved ability to assert human rights (Harmon et al., 2000; Tomaševski, 2001; Schultz, 2003; Asafu-Adjaye, 2012).

However, Harber’s (2004) review of the intellectual history behind formal education (schooling) suggests that there has always been a conflict between education for control in order to reproduce citizens and workers who were conformists, passive and politically docile on the one hand and those who wanted to educate for critical consciousness, individual liberation and participatory democracy on the other. Harber’s

review highlights that since the education debates dating from 1960s, instrumentalist, functionalist and human rights theorists eulogized formal education (schooling) as a universal good (e.g. Schultz, 1971; Almond & Verba, 1989 [1963]; Putnam, 2000). Formal education is seen as “the universal solvent” (Converse, 1972:324) or multiplier that addresses innumerable social questions (Tomaševski, 2001) or as the most “important predictor” (Putnam, 2000:186) when vectored with other variables such sex, place of residence, occupation, income, age, and so on. Converse argued that,

...education is everywhere the universal solvent, and the relationship is always in the same direction. The higher the education, the greater the ‘good’ values of the variable. The educated citizen is attentive, knowledgeable, and participatory and the uneducated citizen is not (Converse, 1972:324)

Neo-liberal theorists promote this view of schooling. They promote formal education for its potential to enhance life chances in employment, enjoyment of a broad range of human rights, intergenerational mobility out of poverty and as a tool for reducing conflicts (Streeten, 1999; Sen, 1999; Tawil & Harley, 2004; World Bank, 2005; Rose & Greeley, 2006; Robertson et al., 2007; Leach & Dunne, 2007; Novelli, 2009). These arguments are overtly established in the neo-liberal propositions behind EFA, MDG goals and the Fast Track Initiatives (FTI) in failed states such as Somalia, which concentrate on the fact that education serves as an engine for economic growth through the accumulation of human capital and boosting levels of social capital (Smith, 1979; Lockheed et al., 1980; Cochrane et al., 1980). This is evident in the policy literature in Ghana where formal education is a given good - it solves the problem of ignorance and increases human goodness; it gives beneficiaries the means for upward social mobility and economic success (MOESS, 2008).

Gender and postcolonial theorists equally argue that education promotes development by extending knowledge, skill and capabilities to those who are marginalised (Connell, 1995; Tikly, 2004). The exemplar is the promotion of girls’ education as “key axes through which efforts for development may be realized” (Dunne, 2008:45). On such grounds, schooling in Ghana, and in most parts of the world, is dominated by views of education as critical to long term improvements in productivity, demographic transition, preventive health care and reductions in inequality (see Kwame, 2001; MOESS, 2008).

Post development and neo-Marxist theorists present alternative arguments that education is not a benign 'good' at every moment of its historical path, but rather as a set of practices that have been used differently by individuals, groups, governments and international agencies depending on their intention, power and conceptions (Bloch & Vavrus, 1998). David Orr (1991) and Ron Miller (2006) contend that the modern school curriculum follows industrial capitalists' modes supported by global education regimes that do not promote a diversified agenda – they promote cultural supremacy through school systems in developing countries by presenting Western values as the only modern, technological and developed ones. Orr (2004:12) argues that school is “a monstrous destroyer of what is loving and life-affirming in the human soul” because the curriculum is neither designed to nourish, cultivate vision and imagination nor gentleness, generosity, caring or compassion. He argued that schools ultimately contribute to disintegrating culture because teachers implement the delivered curriculum which largely serves the need of globalisation.

Scholars of the neo-Marxist left and post-development theorists critique schooling as complicit with the new power structures of global capitalism (Dirlik, 1994; Ahmad, 1995). They contend that uncritical pursuance of internationally agreed goals and targets leaves assumptions about the relationship between education and the politics of economic development unexamined (Berry, 1992; Haas & Nachtigal, 1998; Gruenewald, 2003; Tikly, 2004; Dunne, 2008). They critique functionalist international regimes promoting UBE in developing countries as “Globally Structured Agenda”, which assumed that “education measures are applicable globally, independently of the needs and capacities of the countries” (Verger et al., 2012:11). Some suggest education systems in developing countries need to be rebuilt (Novelli & Cardoso, 2008) through a more strategic public pedagogy (Novelli, 2007).

Anti-colonial theorists critique uncritical eulogy of schooling in developing countries as neglecting the epistemic aspects (Nyerere, 1967; Holt, 1969; Postman & Weingartner, 1969; Illich, 1971; Freire, 1972). They refer to education's role in promoting cultural epistemicide in developing countries through orientalist modes of curriculum

organisation (Said, 1978; Esteva, 2004; Mignolo, 2007; Sanjinés, 2007). Oriental modes as Said (1978) argued, refers to an integral part of European material civilization and culture in which the school curriculum reproduces practices that retain colonial styles, imagery and doctrine. The curriculum expresses authoritarianism or a mode of discourse that unilaterally determines packages of knowledge that can be taught/learned in school and what can be said about the student. Bureaucratized teachers deliver packaged knowledge to 'consumer pupils'. In this way the orientalist curriculum establishes normalcy, power and even undergirds itself because the student (the orient) is not a free subject of thought and action. Illich (1971) argued that, with such curriculum, schools become one case of modern institutions which persuade people to exchange their real lives for packaged substitutes.

Many students, especially those who are poor, intuitively know what the schools do for them. They school them to confuse process and substance. Once these become blurred, a new logic is assumed: the more treatment there is, the better are the results; or, escalation leads to success. The pupil is thereby "schooling" to confuse teaching with learning, grade advancement with education, a diploma with competence, and fluency with the ability to say something new. His imagination is "schooling" to accept service in place of value (Illich, 1971:4).

Illich and many others analyse EFA as a complex interweaving of the relationship between education and economic growth that sustains Western dominance (Illich, 1971; Said, 1978; Mignolo, 2007; Dunne, 2008). They argue that fixations on achieving EFA as "pathways of development for low income countries" tends to ignore important historical and geographical differences and "flatten process and experience into outcomes" (Dunne, 2008:46). Illich (1971:54) critiqued further that schools are designed on the assumption that there is a secret to everything in life; that the quality of life depends on knowing that secret; that secrets can be known only in orderly successions (grade-to-grade progression); and that only teachers can properly reveal (teach) these secrets. Students become inserted into obligatory attendance and curricular restraints or "a curriculum of conditions" which the student must meet if she is to make the grade-to-grade progressions. What schooling finally produces are individuals who conceive of the world as a pyramid of classified packages accessible only to those who pursue schooling. Illich argued that school reproduces social class inequalities by sorting out people who can access the pyramid and those who cannot.

Universal education regimes, for Illich (1971:15), mean that “school is obligatory and becomes schooling for schooling's sake: an enforced stay in the company of teachers, which pays off in the doubtful privilege of more such company.” But schools are even less efficient in the arrangement of the circumstances which encourage the open-ended, exploratory use of acquired skills.

Illich argues that the latent functions performed by modern school systems include custodial care, selection, indoctrination, and learning that define ‘school’ as the age-specific, teacher-related process requiring full-time attendance at an obligatory curriculum. The institutional wisdom of schools tells parents, pupils, and educators that the teacher, if he is to teach, must exercise his authority in a sacred precinct. This, in turn, makes the teacher into custodian, moralist, and therapist. The *teacher-as-custodian* of traditions of knowledge acts as a master of ceremonies, who guides his pupils through a drawn-out labyrinthine ritual in which he arbitrates the observance of rules and administers the intricate rubrics of initiation to life by conceptualising students as children who know nothing. At his best, he sets the stage for the acquisition of some skill and drills his pupils in some basic routines. The *teacher-as-moralist* stands *in loco parentis* for each one and thus ensures that all feel themselves children of the same state. He indoctrinates the pupil about what is right or wrong, not only in school but also in society at large. The *teacher-as-therapist* feels authorized to delve into the personal life of his pupil in order to help him grow as a person. When this function is exercised by a custodian and preacher, it usually means that he persuades the pupil to submit to a domestication of his vision of truth and his sense of what is right. The teacher then combines the functions of judge, ideologue, and doctor.

In that context anti-colonialists contend that school perverts the fundamental style of society because the very process which should prepare for life and safeguards of individual freedom are all cancelled in the dealings of a teacher with his pupil (Illich, 1971; Ghandi, 1993). Schooling becomes synonymous with violence, and as Harber (2004) argued, harms society. Illich argues that a teacher who combines these three powers contributes to the warping of the child much more than the laws which restrict

rights to free assembly or abode. Neither new attitudes of teachers toward their pupils nor the attempt to expand the pedagogue's responsibility until it engulfs students' lifetimes will deliver universal education. He argues for *deschooling*, which implies recognition of the two-faced nature of learning – skill instructions and the search for educational *webs* which heighten the opportunity for each student to transform each moment of his living into one of learning, sharing, and caring. This ideology behind school produces a resistance, which inevitably suggests that universal education through schooling is not feasible. It would be no more feasible if built on the style of present schools. Illich suggests, for example, that international education regimes create an international order built around a Western worldview of education that has become a monstrous destroyer of other cultures (Illich, 1971). Schooling in developing countries mainly serves to sustain Western values that de-privilege local cultures, local knowledge, local languages and identities (Mignolo, 2007).

Ghanaian writers argue, for example, that fixations on EFA account for the dismal failure of the post-colonial state to change inherited school systems so that it reflects changing times, circumstances and social realities (Dei 2004; Adjei, 2007). They contend that education reforms over the years tend to ignore the traces of colonial curriculum history - of stripping students of the knowledge and skills that they bring with them to the schooling setting – in favour of objectified western knowledge that creates gaps between what takes place in the culture and the school (Adjei, 2007; Quartey, 2007). Adjei argues that, despite political independence, the educational policies and practices under the dictates of World Bank and International Monetary Funds (IMF) have inappropriately structured school curricula to de-legitimize and deprivilege Indigenous knowledges that students bring with them to formal education (Adjei, 2007). He argued that this became increasingly and worryingly noticeable as schools were structured and restructured to validate only Western knowledge. In that continuum Dei (2004:9) argued that education, which is needed to develop an individual's sense of "belonging to community with a history and a culture", is inappropriately sacrificed for school knowledge that became the cultural capital by which individuals could access employment in both state and private organizations in Ghana. Western dominance over

what constitutes valid knowledge in schools, in addition to marketing knowledge and culture, subsequently made many Ghanaian students feel disenfranchised and disengaged from the knowledge that is being produced, validated, and disseminated in schools (Dei, 2004; Adjei, 2007). As such writers argue that the inability of the school system in Ghana to contextualize standards and excellence to needs and conditions of the local people has resulted in an intelligentsia with little or no relevant skills and knowledge to address needs within their local communities.

Anti-colonial theories draw on Green's (1990) historical study of the purposes of schooling which argued that schools were initially designed to:

assimilate immigrant cultures, to promote established religious doctrines, to spread the standard form of the appointed national language, to forge a national identity and a national culture, to generalise new habits of routine and rational calculation, to encourage patriotic values, to inculcate moral disciplines and, above all, to indoctrinate in the political and economic creeds of the dominant classes. ... It sought to create each person as a universal subject but it did so differentially according to class and gender (Green, 1990:80)

Ghandi (1993) argued that schooling from its colonial education roots is a citadel of slavery that denies learners object lessons in liberty and self-respect. Harber (2004) London (2000) and Molteno et al. (2000) argue that the original purpose of schools as institutions of control persists in ex-colonies where they remain entrenched by 'beneficiaries' of the colonial education system who have become peddlers of authoritarianism in schooling. Colonial school organisations - systems of domination that undermine local knowledges and objectify students - remain intractable as normalized institutional practices (Dei, 2006). They argue that schooling privileges Western knowledge generated through universities, research institutions and private firms and in doing so ignores 'indigenous' knowledge of people in ex-colonies where the institution has been traditionally used to promote Western hegemony (Malinowski, 1936; Stambach, 2010). By 'Indigenous' knowledge they mean the cultural heritage and histories of peoples (see Dei, 2002). This knowledge is relevant knowledge because it

encapsulates the common-good-sense ideas and cultural knowledges of local peoples concerning the everyday realities of living ... saliency of cultural traditions, values, belief systems and world views that, in any indigenous

society are imparted to the younger generation by community elders. ... traditional knowledge, which is inter-generational knowledge passed on by community elders; empirical knowledge, which is based on careful observations of the surrounding environments (nature, culture and society); and lastly, revealed knowledge, which is provided through dreams, visions and intuition. ...Indigenous knowledges view communalism as a mode of thought, emphasizing the sense of belongingness with a people and the land they share. It is not individualized and disconnected into a universal abstract. It is grounded in a people and a place (Dei, 2002:4-5).

Warren (1991) further explained 'indigenous' knowledge as the basis for local-level decision making in agriculture, health care, food preparation, education, natural-resource management, and a host of other activities in rural communities. Anti-colonialists suggest that schooling in developing countries mainly serves to sustain Western values that de-privilege local cultures, local knowledge, local languages and identities (Mignolo, 2007). Schools in developing countries such as Ghana are sites where colonial relations are perpetuated in the validation of particular knowledges and the ontological status of students as learners within the institution (Dei, 2004; Adjei, 2007). They suggest that colonial relations are reproduced in schooling through "the differential treatment of bodies, the hierarchization of particular knowledges, and the peripheralization of certain experiences, cultures and histories" (Dei et al., 2006:8-9). Indigenous knowledge that is fluid and negotiable when applied is replaced by abstract Western knowledge that is constructed outside of the socio-cultural life experiences of the students, and in a language in which they have very little linguistic capital (Dei, 2004). As such anti-colonialists contend that schools practices – organisation, teaching and learning - are ultimately connected to global regimes that are intended to serve a unified agenda (Freire, 1972; Giroux & McLaren, 1994). By unified agenda these anti-colonial writers mean uncritical international regimentation through EFA initiatives are intend to present arguments that schooling is a given good without acknowledging the role the institution in promoting Western dominance and cultural dislocations within developing countries.

From these debates, Dei and Asgharzadeh (2001) have developed a critical anti-colonial discursive framework (CADF) for educational analysis which suggests that

school organisation, knowledge practices and language of instruction in developing countries tend to de-historicise students and uproot them from their cultural heritage as colonialism does. This framework, which I will discuss more in the next section, argues for analysis of the political economy of knowledge production situated in student experiences in order to deconstruct the deficits produced in positivistic policy studies in developing countries (Dei, 2004). Supporters of the CADF argue that schooling accords certain privileges and legitimacy to certain forms of knowing while invalidating Indigenous knowledges in developing countries, particularly in ex-colonies (Adjei, 2007). I draw on CADF because proponents argue that it has the potential to complement what we know from the dominant functionalist research (Dei, 2004; Dei & Kempf, 2006; Adjei, 2007). As Dunne et al. (2007) argued, exploring students' experiences would help address the deficits that often emerge from large scale positivistic policy studies. Also, as my research context is a former colony, Ghana, the critical anti-colonial discursive framework becomes immediately useful. Finally, the key advocate – George Joseph Sefa Dei - is a Ghanaian who insists that using CADF provides a pathway to decolonising education, which implies reclaiming Indigenous Ghanaian cultures, languages, values, and worldviews and re-positioning them as an integral part of the education system (Dei 2004; Adjei, 2007). In the next sections, I explain this theoretical framework in more detail and used it to explore the literature on schooling.

2.3 Anti-colonial perspectives of schooling in developing countries

Discussion of conditions of schooling in developing countries is not new in the literature (e.g. Levin & Lockheed, 1993; Mirembe & Davies, 2001; London, 2002; Leach, 2003). Despite propositions and research evidence that formal education plays a critical role in both individual and national development many scholars contend that the modern institution of schooling in developing countries is connected to colonial ideologies (Smith, 1976; Hanushek, 1995; London, 2002; Harber, 2004; Psacharopoulos, 2007; Asafu-Adjaye, 2012). They critiqued that school practices in developing countries mainly perpetuate Western dominance through authoritarian curriculum modes that deprive indigenous knowledge and solidify social class distinctions and inequalities

(Mazrui, 1978; Woolman, 2001; Kuepie, et al., 2006; Adjei, 2007). These criticisms are mainly expressed in the critical anti-colonial discursive framework (CADF) proposed by Dei and Asgharzadeh (2001).

The CADF considers schooling in Foucault's terms as a colonial institution (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001). The *colonial* is considered not simply as "foreign" or "alien" but something "imposed" and "dominating" (Dei, 2004:15). *Coloniality* is addressed in terms of persisting "vocabulary of power" and discourses "located within traditions of western rationality" (Rizvi et al., 2006:251). Its epistemology of the colonised is anchored in the indigenous sense of collective and common colonial consciousness (Dei, 2002:7). It places value on "collectives comprised of bodies who are cognizant of differences and who unite around common struggles against social structures of oppression" (Angod, 2006:165). Proponents of the CADF argue that a key purpose for the creation and spread of mass systems of formal schooling to ex-colonies was the "need to control populations in those colonies" (Harber, 2004:71). They suggest this control works in multiple ways – producing citizen workers for European merchant houses; creating a consumer taste for European goods; and creating a mind-set of colonial practices as the standard, etc. (Macedo, 1999; Dei, 2004). The CADF theorists argue that analysis of schooling in developing countries is not productive "unless the legacies of colonialism are examined" (Viruru, 2005:10) because the fundamental purpose of using schools as institutions of control has "proved impervious to change" (Harber, 2004:71). They justify such analysis for its potential to initiate "radical rethinking of knowledge and social identities authored and authorized by colonialism" (Prakash, 1994:1475).

The CADF analyses marginalisation of Indigenous knowledges in the curriculum as an important entry point to account for colonial modes of representation perpetuated through schooling; and how these reproduce global inequalities in which discourse and power are inextricably linked (Dei, 2004; Viruru, 2005). It recognizes the importance of local knowledges emanating from cultural histories and argues that "colonial constructions affect knowledge production with profound material consequences" (Dei, 2006:13) because marginalized groups are subjects of their own experiences and

histories (Fanon, 1963; Memmi, 1969; Foucault, 1980; Dei, 2002). They study schooling by questioning institutional hierarchies, contestations around knowledge production and the implications for social identities (Freire, 1972; Foucault, 1980; Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001; Dei, 2004; Smith, 2005; Mignolo, 2007).

They draw on scholars on the neo-Marxist left (e.g. Ahmad, 1995; Dirlik, 1994) to criticise postcolonial theory as complicit with the neo-colonial power structures of global capitalism (Dei, 2004; Mignolo, 2007). They critique postcolonial theory as “a cover-up” (Dei, 2004:259) of settled identities: fixed ideas and culturally authored definitions located within traditions of western rationality (Rizvi et al., 2006; Dei, 2004). Mita (1993) described post-colonialism as ‘incapable’ of presenting a “truer description of what influences the arts and politic in the ... world” of people living in ex-colonies. Mita explains that the ‘cover-up’ in postcolonial theory is the attempt to direct our attention to ‘post-colonial’ as if colonisation is a finished business. Smith (1998:14), writing from New Zealand, argued:

Naming the world as ‘post-colonial’ is, from indigenous perspectives, to name colonization as ‘finished business’. According to many indigenous perspectives the term post-colonial can only mean one thing; the colonizers have left. There is rather compelling evidence that this has not in fact occurred.

Additionally, proponents of CADF critique postcolonial theory’s emphasis on human agency as “individualized renditions and interpretations of experience” (Prah, 1997:16). They argue that postcolonial theory’s emphasis on human agency “inevitably naturalizes dangerous hierarchies” (McLaren, 2001:22) by presenting autonomous individuals and failing to account for collective identities. Proponents suggest postcolonial theory

dehistoricises and homogenizes human identities as totally/completely fragmented, multiple and transient. In doing so, it negates/repudiates the repressive presence of collective oppressions, colonial exploitations and group marginality, as well as the shared histories of collective resistances of marginalized groups (Dei, 2004:259).

They contend that postcolonial theory fails to recognize whether resistance of colonised groups produces enough ‘energy’ that is sufficient to disrupt or re-organise

institutionalised regimes (Dei, 2004; Angod, 2006:165). They argue that postcolonial theory instead of eulogizing Foucault's notion of power as 'ubiquitous' should recognize, in Bourdieu's terms, "the way society becomes deposited in persons in the form of lasting dispositions, or trained capacities and structured propensities to think, feel and act in determinant ways, which then guide them" (Wacquant 2005:316). They draw on Bourdieu's (1984) notion of 'habitus' and Giddens's (1984) idea of structuration to explain how colonial institutions such as schools have created social norms and defined reality for people (Navarro, 2006:16). They suggest, for example, that institutional 'habitus' is neither determined by free will nor 'structure' because it is created "over a long historical period" (Navarro, 2006:16). It is determined by dispositions that are both shaped by past events and structures, shapes current practices and structures and also, importantly, condition our very perceptions of these (Bourdieu 1984:170). They slight postcolonial theory for ignoring the impediments that social institutions such as schools place on individuals. They draw on Giddens (1984) to slight postcolonial theory for ignoring the impediments that social institutions such as schools place on individuals. As Giddens suggested, social institutions such as schools consist of rules, principles and structural properties such as regions as well as social systems of interaction that support the reflexive monitoring of people. The institutional relations also include 'routinization' of social encounters. Routinization implies assignment of roles and duties that occasion discursive consciousness - that people know their places and perform according to the rules of social order within the institution "in an unquestioning way" (Giddens, 1990:419). Therefore, the CADF suggests that resistance of students to teacher authority for example may be "ultimately only stratagems" that never succeed in reversing their reciprocal relations occasioned by public pedagogy on schooling (Rabinow, 1984:292).

In its analysis of school, the CADF examines the co-existence of different cultures, knowledge and identities (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001). It analyses how institutional power is employed to marginalise, to de-legitimise some knowledge and the experiences of subordinated groups as critical indexes that sustain dominance (Sayed, 1971; Foucault, 1977; Dei, 2004). It explores institutional practices to understand the

creation of stereotypes and boundaries that suppress student identities and other cultural values (Mignolo, 2004).

In terms of knowledge construction in school, the CADF sits uncomfortably with the performance model of curriculum organisation (Bernstein, 2000) which has two significant aspects: standard curriculum, which presents a package of official truth (sacred knowledge) and a measure of competence, which tends to regulate every dialectic expression (enactment or spoken word) between teachers and students inside or outside the classroom. The standard curriculum eulogizes knowledges that are pre-determined, horizontally structured and hierarchically organised and its measures of competence prescribe “behaviour, conduct or practice in one form or another” (Bernstein 2000:166). These standards become 'pedagogic devices' or 'perfection codes' (Evans & Davies, 2005) which tends to regulate and shape the interplay of social interactions, the grammar and syntax of the pedagogic device, shape the voice of education in contemporary education policy, frame the actions and thinking of teachers and 'the imaginary subjects' that they construct through the 'body pedagogies' of classrooms (Bernstein, 1996). This happens in two ways. First, the performance mode excludes certain knowledges as 'profane' knowledge because those are not consistent with the sacred truth of the standard curriculum which is designed to produce particular types of citizens. Second, it normalises how student identities are fashioned and the particular behaviours expected in school.

Anti-colonialists critique Bernstein's performance model as providing both a corporeal and a linguistic device that helps in shaping 'the imaginary subjects that teachers construct and which regulate modalities' and 'the constructive activities of children' (Ivinson & Duveen, 2006:111). They view performance modes of knowledge production as the perpetration of the so called 'civilising agenda' (Harber, 2004; Dei, 2004). They suggest that, within the context of Bernstein's performance model, schooling also has other significant roles – control and reproduction – which makes school “a site of struggle, where the negotiations taking place can either strengthen or weaken possibilities for change” (Epstein, 1993:157).

In terms of *Control*, critiques suggest that schools operate “on the principle of normalisation” (Sayed, 2004:22) or the creation of a monoculture that limits spaces of freedom for students (Foucault, 1972). Critics argue that the relationship between teachers and students is structured within a frame of logic where knowledge is predetermined, and functions as a mechanism for coding their relationships (Said, 1978; Lawrence & Low, 1990). McLean and Abbas (2009) analysed the relationship in Bernstein’s (2000:12) performance terms as teaching (transmission by teachers), learning (acquisition by students) and evaluation (assessment by teachers) which suggests that teachers determine *what* knowledge students must receive. This institutional *habitus* is also criticised as creating conditions for *Reproduction* - where schooling rather than ameliorates, perpetuates or reaffirms social class inequalities in society (Haber, 2004; Meighan, 1997). Research by Willis (1977) in Birmingham found reproduction occurs via learning of values, attitudes and habits characteristic of the society that students accepted “in an unquestioning way” (Giddens, 1990:419). Willis suggested that opposition to the school is principally manifested in the struggle to win symbolic and physical space from the institution and its rules and to defeat its main perceived purpose: to make you work (Willis, 1977:26).

One suggestion is that school relations and classroom interactions between teachers and students tend to reproduce inequality (Harber, 2004; Dei, 2004). The school curriculum engenders “introjected identities” and applied orientations (Bernstein, 2000:60) that create a social gap between students and teachers. It positions teachers to stress unbalanced cognitive intellectualism (Slee et al., 1998), which requires that students become *indoctrinated* into accepting the ‘sacred’ knowledge (McLean & Abbas, 2009). Teaching is by a delivery model – something teachers (*givers of knowledge*) know is transferred to students who are *recipients* (Harber, 2004). This legitimises students as *sequestered* and *peripheral* beings in the construction of knowledge (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The dominant classroom interaction is *passive students* whose activities are limited to rote learning (Salisbury & Jackson, 1996) that

produces *clever conformists* rather than *daring innovators* as ‘obedient conformity’ is rewarded and ‘deviant innovation’ is punished (Wright, 1997).

Giddens (1990) argued further that schooling actually perpetrates forms of violence, even making it worse. Harber (2004:69) referred to the “dehumanising nature” of schools. He argued that schools fail to recognise the individual’s or even group’s needs and peculiarities because they are not necessarily designed to do so. He draws on Green’s (1990) historical review of schooling and Foucault’s theoretical analysis to argue that school relations are characterised by bureaucratic routines – constantly measuring, categorising, ordering and regulating students - essentially designed to prepare people with subordinate values and behaviours. This would suggest that analysis of schooling in developing countries should include examining the regimes of power and how these are implicated in the formation of student identities. The following sections discuss anti-colonial conceptions of schools as locations of power and identities.

2.4 Schools as locations of power

Central to anti-colonial understanding of schooling in developing countries is the idea that certain regimes of power in colonial schooling “remain entrenched in ex-colonies and education ministry officials continue to be resistant to the suggestion of changes that appear to offer anything less rigidly defined” (Molteno et al., 2000:13). By regimes of power, I mean the structure of school organisation and social practices that are framed and modulated spatially to ensure continuous control and regulation; and in which students become “immersed and resigned” (Freire, 1993:29). Organisational theorists do argue that power can be and is distributed through ways in which institutions like schools are organised” (Epstein, 1993:11). Although organisational theorists also understand power in terms of “both organised institutional power and diffuse discursive power” (Connell, 2002:59) they argue that “standardizations and generalizations characteristic of the institution” (Smith, 2005:36) shape the conditions of *all* actions, even when it appears to be in ‘enabling’ forms (Hayward, 2000:8, 21). Theorists argue that institutions such as schools, have particular configurations of

people, histories, geographies, sets of ideas and justifications for the exercise of power (Parker, 2000). Similarly, the CADF argues that schools have “power configurations embedded in ideas, cultures, and histories of knowledge production, validation, and use” (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001:300). Proponents’ views of schools as “power-with-a-face” (Hayward, 2000:8) also call for analysis that accounts for “the concentration of power in hierarchies [and] “the role that institutional structures have in maintaining power relations” (Epstein, 1993:12). These ideas of schools as locations of power are expressed in two key concepts: *the coloniality of power* and *coloniality of knowledge*.

What Quijano (2007) calls *Coloniality of power* connects schools as “geohistorical places” (Quijano, 2000:547) or fields that serve material, political and ideological interests (Dei, 2004) located within “long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism” (Maldonad-Torres, 2007:243). Discussions of coloniality of power position school as the “locus of complex intersections” (Smith, 1987:33) that seek “to normalize the social relations of domination” (Quijano, 2005) and “Western styles for dominating” (Rizvi et al., 2006:250). Using Said’s (1978) ideas of orientalism and the ideological critiques of Illich (1971), coloniality of power views international regimes on compulsory education, for example, as intended to influence public policy in developing countries in order to maintain Western notions of development through the institution of schooling. Quijano argues that school as a living legacy of colonialism continues to promote persistent social hierarchical orders that prescribe values to certain people while disenfranchising others located at the bottom because of their phenotypic traits and/or a culture presumed to be inferior. Theorists argue that schools as colonial institutions outlived formal colonialism but became “the country town” or “retail trading station” (Smith, 2005:16) for “materially rooted power structures” (Regalsky & Laurie, 2007:234) including persistent categorisation and discriminatory discourse including the historic European ranking of women as inferior that was reflected in the social and economic order of colonial times (Lugones, 2007). This implied that school practices institutionalise gender (I discuss this more in section 2.5.3 of this chapter).

Anti-colonialists explain that *coloniality of power* resides in the imposition of norms in school (of behaviour, of attitudes, of knowledge) such that “it is difficult to sustain [any] distinction between free action and action shaped by power” (Hayward, 2000:10). Robbins (1994) argued that schools co-opt elitist authoritative structures that are every bit as oppressive as colonial rule. Using Foucault’s analysis, anti-colonial propositions argue that power regimes dating from colonial times are integral in the bells, timetables, hierarchies, standardisations, assessment and rules of discipline that have substantial basis in regulated bodily comportment (Smith, 1987; Molteno et al., 2000; London, 2002; Harber, 2004; Dei, 2004). They interpret school policy and organisational hierarchies as corporeal devices that stipulate permitted and forbidden movements (Freire, 1993; Dei, 2004; Smith, 2005). The Ghanaian literature suggests that peaceful laws and practices, which help to maintain law and order in schools, may be *instruments, masks or guises* (CRDD, 2001:7) that ensure that power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, learning processes and everyday lives (Foucault, 1980:39). For the students, their “slightest words are linked to obligations that condemn their slightest innovation to conformity” (Foucault, 1972:208) despite arguments that regulation does not work on all people in the same way because many rebel, disobey or react violently (Harber, 2004). They are watched as *subjects* of “uninterrupted examination” (Foucault, 1977:186).

Coloniality of power in school is also viewed in terms of discursive superiority and inferiority (Smith, 2005; Said, 1978; Illich, 1971). Discursive superiority implies a system of hierarchies where schools create regimes of power not only by defining norms instantiated in school policy practices – formal curriculum and assessment procedures - but also in the techniques of social practice social relations (Hays, 2000). Alexander (2000:562) stated that school power regimes extend to “the furthest recesses of task, activity and interaction, mediated through routine, rule and ritual”. The proposition is that school processes are framed to control students through routinized authoritarianism, definitive linguistic labels, norms of behaviour, promotion of dominant values and basic assumptions that underlie schooling (Stoll & Fink, 2001).

In reference to Ghana, Agbenyegah (2008:58) explained that schools should be understood as “spaces of learning and ... place characteristics to students’ general experiences”. This highlights a conception of school as a ‘space’ and ‘place’ where each event or episode shapes people by giving positions of power to some but not others (Said, 1978; Foucault, 1995; Gore, 2001). Actions, symbolisms and representations in school affect people, shape relationships drawing categories and identities (Smith, 2005). The idea is that schools are institutions “populated and influenced by people who occupy different power positions” (Parker, 2000:226) based on a hierarchical system of classifications and difference, which occasions the exercise of “social and positional power” (Cohen et al., 2007:27).

Quijano’s (2007) conception of coloniality of power primarily suggests that the institution of schooling sustains practices that position one group over the other by imposing observance of its norms, through the school curriculum for example, in ways that are necessarily characteristic of colonial rule. A key example in the literature is a perpetration of “the Victorian predilection for physical chastisement” or use of corporal punishment (caning), which was spread to “many parts of the globe through colonialism” (Harber, 2004:74) and justified with the religious concept of beating evil out of children (Tafa, 2002:2). This is presently defended as critical to school discipline, which implied “the perceived right of teachers to punish, inherent in the need to maintain control and order” (Harber, 2004:73). Also, writers cite studies from former colonies including India, Mali, Lebanon, Liberia, Mozambique, Pakistan, Mongolia, and Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, Ghana, which identified the persistence of colonial-style characteristics of authoritarianism, stress on conformity and regulation of students in school (Molteno et al., 2000; London, 2002; Harber, 2004). The studies highlight that these colonial regimes of power remain entrenched in former colonies because education ministry officials continue to be resistant to any change with the refrain that abolition of which would result in classroom disorder and failure (Molteno et al., 2000; Harber, 2004).

Coloniality of power is also addressed, in terms of student positioning, as follows:

...power over what is taught and learned, how it is taught and learned, where it is taught and learned, when it is taught and learned and what the general learning environment is like is not in the hands of pupils (Harber, 2004:24).

Miller (1990) described such practice as a 'poisonous pedagogy' that position teachers as carriers of traditions of knowledge. Poisonous because it is directed toward breaking the will of students, in order to make them obedient subjects, with the aid of open or concealed use of force, manipulation, and repression. Miller suggests that to survive and be loved, in school, a child learns to obey by repressing his or her feelings. The result, said Miller, is mostly depression, ebbing of vitality and the loss of self. This power practices connect coloniality of power to the coloniality of knowledge as inseparable twins.

Coloniality of knowledge is an epistemic process of privileging some knowledge as more valid for development (Sanjinés, 2007). Proponents suggest that school curricula promote particular hierarchies of knowledge which do not necessarily serve the needs of developing countries (Escobar, 2007; Mignolo, 2007). They refer to the use of a prescribe curriculum and foreign language for instruction, for example, as a 'deterritorialization' which implies wholesale disparagement and discard of traditions in developing countries in favour of global agendas (Said, 1978; Freire, 1993; Adjei, 2007). Theorists analyse the delivered curriculum as controlled (and controllable), ordered, predetermined, and largely behaviourist in outcome to the consistent advantage of modernity and globalisation (Tyler, 1946; Mignolo, 2002). In relation to Ghana, Dei (2004) and others argued that the disparagement includes the use of English for instruction, de-legitimation of indigenous knowledges (cultural heritage and histories) devaluation of local languages as less useful (Dei, 2006; Owu-Ewie, 2006; Adjei, 2007). So, the CADF asks that curriculum analysis should concern

not only *what* knowledge is important but also *whose* knowledge is important in the curricula, *what and whose* interests such knowledge serves, and *how* the curriculum and pedagogy serve (or do not serve) differing interests (Cohen et al, 2007:31).

Freire (1972:46-47) depicted the coloniality of knowledge in terms of authoritarian classroom relations as follows:

1. The teacher teaches and the students are taught
2. The teacher knows everything and the students know nothing
3. The teacher thinks and the students are thought about
4. The teacher talks and the students listen –meekly
5. The teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined
6. The teacher chooses and enforces his or her choice and the students comply
7. The teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher
8. The teacher chooses the programme content and the students comply
9. The teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with professional authority which he or she sets in opposition to the freedom of the students
10. The teacher is a subject of the learning process while the student are mere objects

Freire's proposition does not imply that teachers colonise knowledge. From a critical pedagogy perspective that places primacy on the political economy of knowledge production, the teachers' approach is a depiction of how the delivered curriculum transforms "the consciousness of the person prescribed to into one that conforms to the prescriber's consciousness" (Freire, 1993:27). As Maclure explains, the delivered curricula

...construe teachers as mere conduits for the transmission of packages of knowledge into learners' heads, and assume that the knowledge thus conveyed can be assimilated uniformly, without delay or detour. They envisage learning and teaching as a colourless, passionless pursuit, and the curriculum as a static body of knowledge over which teachers and learners have little prerogative (Maclure, 2006:2-3).

The suggestion is that the delivered curriculum implemented in schools placed a hold on the degree of control teachers and students "possess over the selection, organisation, pacing and timing of the knowledge transmitted and received in the pedagogic relationship" (Bernstein, 1975:30). Hayward argues that even if the delivered curriculum asks teachers to use child centred approaches, it assumes that teachers are 'transformative intellectuals' in a privileged position to emancipate students from their 'repressed' knowledge and allowing them to express their genuine utopian desires (Hayward, 2000; Jessica, 2009). Similar to the position of Hayward

(2000) and Jessica (2009), the CADF does not necessarily represent teachers as oppressors.

Teachers are conceptualised as constrained implementers of a delivered curriculum that attempts to homogenise human experience, and in which students are totalised and educated to particular regimes of knowledge (Freire, 1972; Foucault, 1995; Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001). It suggests that teachers, as bureaucratic technicians, implement the nationally prescribed curriculum. In doing so, teachers use delivery modes or “styles of classroom discipline and teaching methodologies that were current a hundred years ago or more” but remain entrenched in ex-colonies (Molteno et al, 2000:13). As in Ghana, the curriculum is delivered with accompanying syllabus and teaching guides which makes teachers use delivery modes of instruction (Mireku et al., 2005). This understanding of *Coloniality of knowledge* is depicted in Bernstein’s (1996:39) idea of “performance mode” as the most productive form of knowledge production where knowledge is conceptualised as fixed and pre-determined. Bernstein’s (1996) performance mode suggests a notion that “human beings have universal corporeal potential” and announces the body as always both ‘being’ and ‘becoming’, capable of *action* and *performance* (Zembylas, 2008:4). The suggestion is that the way to train and harness the potential of new workers is to use the corporeal device of pedagogy (using delivery modes of learning) to standards of expectation to which the training must aspire.

One problem related to *coloniality of knowledge* is what Foucault (1977:182) would call normalising judgement, where individual characteristics are referred to a whole that is “at once a field of comparison, a space of differentiation”. This is expressed in academic assessments, based on the delivered curriculum standards, which falsely justified the exclusion of some students as ‘failures’ on instrumental grounds (Harber, 2004). In terms of identities, schooling becomes a process of differentiation, of identifying the *academically incompetent* and *the excellent* (Apple, 2006). The relevance for the Ghanaian context is Salisbury and Jackson’s (1996) idea of examinations setting up a competitive schooling regime that produces resentment towards *academic failures*. The anti-colonial criticism is that this negates efforts

towards achieving EFA by positioning 'academic' success as the main door to educational progress (Said, 1978; Esteva, 2004; Mignolo, 2004). This is because academic failures may drop out of school if they do not seem to measure up (Talbot, 1998).

A major effect of *coloniality of knowledge* is what Harber (2004) called *reproduction of knowledge*. As mentioned earlier, reproduction of knowledge relates to how schooling "expresses and reaffirms existing inequalities far more than it acts to change them" (Giddens, 1997:420). Lugones (2008:8) expanded this concept in terms of what she calls the *coloniality of gender*. She suggests that, modern system of schooling contributes to the reproduction of gender norms such as "the exclusion of women" (Oyewùmí, 1997:123) "introduced by the West as a tool of domination that designates two binarily opposed and hierarchical social categories" (Lugones, 2008:8). She suggests that the authority patterns and forms of discipline reinforce key aspects of hegemonic masculinity. Dei's (2004:219) analysis of education in Africa, using Ghana as a case study argued that "developing critical knowledge of the content and quality of instruction" will, for example, highlight the structural processes that keep women in gender stereotypic roles. He argued that patriarchal ideologies permeate the processes of educational delivery, that is, the structures for teaching, learning and administration of education. He called for educational analysis that involves "explicating ideologies that continue to create and perpetuate oppressive ... relations in schools" (Dei, 2004:219).

Using his personal experience, as a product of schooling in Ghanaian, Adjei (2007) argued that coloniality of knowledge makes Ghanaian students feel disenfranchised and disengaged from the knowledge that is being produced, validated, and disseminated in schools. He referred that reproduction of knowledge occasions rote learning of fixed and abstract concepts pre-determined in the curriculum. Adjei suggested that within school and classroom students are not allowed to critique the knowledge being generated in schools. As such, some critical writers call for epistemic dialogue in questioning the attachment of public pedagogy to specific forms of knowing

(Illich, 1971; Novelli & Cardoso, 2008). They suggest that “diverse forms of producing and transmitting knowledge can coexist and complement each other” (Castro-Gomez, 2007:444). In the specific case of Ghana, Dei (2004:15) argues that a critical anti-colonial analysis “can contribute to a meaningful transformation of educational processes” where teachers and students will not be “constrained actors” and “subjugated knowers” (Talbot, 1998:157).

2.5 Schools as locations of identities

Schools, writes Nayak and Kehily (2008:111) are endowed with “powerful imaginary tropes of identification”. This section focuses on anti-colonial conceptions of school, which argues that identities are constructed through “the differential treatment of bodies, the hierarchization of particular knowledges, and the peripheralization of certain experiences, cultures and histories” (Dei et al., 2006:8-9). Harber (2004) argues that schooling has always played a part in the creation, reproduction and modification of group identities. He suggests that “colonial education, for example, played a major role in this and has left a legacy of classifications, labels and negative relationships that still influence the politics of post-colonial countries today” (Harber, 2004:85-86). The understanding is that schools operate as legitimated institutions to educate, and so, has the potential to perpetuate or transform identities (Howard, 2008). Gender theorisation and analysis also write from institutional focus that explains “school as a site for perpetuating or challenging gender violence and injustices” (Parkes et al., 2013:553). These arguments suggest that schools have place characteristics for the production of identities that are

relational, situated in and produced by historical and social relations, ... [and] how these broader social relations become incorporated within the emotions, beliefs and practices of individuals, and with moments of resistance. (Parkes et al. 2013:548)

I take a relational view of *identities* as “*being-with ... others*” (Nancy, 2000:32) or ‘becomings’ within particular normative and technical regimes (Butler, 1990; Hall, 1997; Schostak, 2002; du Gay, 2007). In terms of school relations I see *identities* as organised distinctions and classifications within social groups. Agbenyega & Klibthong’s (2011:407) research in Ghana described one such distinction - “the teacher

is a teacher and the student is a student". This portrays two homogenised groups – students and teachers. Agbenyega and Klibthong explained that "*the strength of boundary*" (Bernstein, 1975:30) between the two groups necessarily position students as inferior because public pedagogy allows teachers to author views about them, describing them, teaching them and 'ruling' over them. This argument suggests that school identities have implications for pedagogic relationships that occur between teachers and students.

Uzzell (2005:3) argued that "schooling inescapably involves judgments about truth and virtue, about what kind of person a youngster should aspire to be". Whereas that conception is not entirely unproblematic, Uzzell suggested that its operationalization through performance curriculum models of schooling "make enemies of people who could otherwise be friends" (Uzzell, 2005). This is because, in order to achieve the normalised objectives of schooling, teachers seek to ensure that students become *conformists*, obeying unquestioningly and unhesitatingly (Piro, 2008). *Non-conformists* are diagnosed and labelled as having for example "attention deficit disorder" (Harber, 2004).

Dei (2004:237) pointed to schools as "sites and sources" for the manifestation of "bias, discrimination, exclusion and marginality". He proffered, for example, that "differences and disparities in Ghanaian schooling go back to colonial times" when teachers use "the self as a knowledge base", "denied heterogeneity ... and maintain glaring disparities and inequalities that persist and grow along constructed lines of difference" (p.247). This denial of difference implies that institutional regimes put pressure on students to conform to particular norms or risk being withdrawn either informally or formally, promoting social exclusion (Boaler et al., 2000; Castro-Gomez, 2007:429). Dei argued that, for the students who are asked to subsume their difference under the rubric of the 'common', the intellectual stakes are high, particularly as a result of hidden and open emotional and spiritual injuries that are inflicted on victims when the expression of their differences are denied or construed in deficit (Dei et al., 2006:57).

Others argue that school relations make students subservient members of the institution and position them to development of “academic identities” (Olitsky, 2008:30) that may be at odds with their knowledge of self-worth (see Foucault, 1977; Escobar, 2001; Smith, 2005; Piro, 2008;). Moore et al. (2007) subdivided into *positive academic identities* and *negative academic identities*. The *positive academic identities* imply that individuals consider themselves as insiders to education; they see themselves as members of scholarly learning communities. Students with positive academic identities seek to accomplish school-related goals through actions such as completing assignments, reading independently, and studying for tests (Jackson, 2003). These individuals align themselves with academic cultures, identifying with teachers and conscientious peers. They see themselves connected with academic ways of life. They display positive academic identities when they present themselves as the kinds of people who embrace formal education, who take school seriously. Moore et al. (2007) suggested that students who display *negative academic identities* tend to see themselves as lost in school, as educational outsiders, as unsuccessful learners who do not belong in academic settings. Colvin and Schlosser (1997) added that students who demonstrate negative academic identities often act out apathetic or defiant behaviours as they resist school and school-related literacies. Students from marginalised communities, in particular, tend to develop academic identities directly in opposition to academic achievement because schools are part of the dominant culture that has historically discriminated against them (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). They put in little of the time and effort needed to excel academically, because they view striving to achieve in school as futile (Olitsky, 2008). Jeffrey & Woods (1996:326) put it differently that some students who cannot excel academically become *demotivated*, lose self-esteem and feel that *they* “are performing to meet *someone* else’s expectation and goals”.

Some view schools institutions implicated the creation of images of ‘otherness’ located in the exteriority of space (Foucault, 1977; Escobar, 2004:214). Foucault perceives school hierarchy as Jeremy Bentham’s panopticon where students become *objects of inspection* (Foucault, 1977:186). As Foucault suggests, students become *coerced*

subjects: they come to anticipate responses to their actions with *anxiety-provoking* feelings, which damage children by removing imagination, creativity and the importance of emotions in relationships. Foucault's perception of school, as a space deliberately designed for supervising and hierarchizing further suggests that the institution creates conditions "seriation of school subjects" (Piro, 2008). Seriation implies the institution singles out individuals or groups and enables comparisons to be made between *the lazy, the stubborn, the incurably imbecile* and others. Seriation provides ways in which students think memories that structure understandings of *self* and gives positions of power (Košir & Pečjak, 2005). This suggests that school hierarchy is an important 'regulator' and determinant of group and individual identities.

Apple's (2006:70) notion of "structures of feeling" or a set of metaphorical concentric circles stacked on top of each other in a way that limit the possibilities of social action also suggest the role of schools in developing student identities. Gordon et al. (2000) take this view further by suggesting that students develop a 'desert of feelings' of various kinds - pleasures, desires, anxieties, joys, fears - by which individuals, with some measure of agency and resistance, contextualize schooling within the broader circumstances of their lives to make present and future decisions. Harber (2004) adds that schools map aptitudes, assesses characters, draws up rigorous classifications, and ultimately acts to structure particular subjectivities. Thus it is important to explore student perspectives on the curriculum to deconstruct their views on construction of knowledge and spatial distributions within the institution.

2.5.1 School language and identities

This section focuses on the literature on school language and identities. The main focus is language as a symbol of identity and the politics of educational language choice in postcolonial societies, which is not uncommon in anti-colonial analysis (Adger, 1998; Fordham, 1998; Bucholtz, 1999; Toohey, 2000; Bhat, 2008).

In terms of language as a symbol of identity, Gibson (2004) argued that language – both code and content – has a complicated relationship with interpretations of

identities. Anzaldua (1987:59) summarise the language-identity fusion: “identity is twin skin of linguistic identity – I am my language.” Edwards (2009) puts it that “the language we use forms an important part of our sense of who we are – of our identity.” Painter (2010:252) argued that language is always “tied up with politics of identity in contexts that are characterised by intergroup differences and inequality.” Best et al. (2000) suggests that linguistic socialisation develops our personality, our sense of self and our identity. Spolsky (1999) argued that when we hear someone speak, we immediately make guesses about gender, education level, age, profession, and place of origin. Jackson’s (1989) *Maps of Meaning* offered a distinctive take on language. Jackson argues that the discursive construction of people occur via language. All these points above suggest that language is a powerful symbol of individual and group identities.

Fanon (1967) assigned pre-eminence to the language-identity relationship in any analysis of colonialism.

I ascribe a basic importance to the phenomenon of language. That is why I find it necessary to begin with this subject, which should provide us with one of the elements in the coloured man’s comprehension of the dimension of the other. For it is implicit that to speak is to exist absolutely for the other (Fanon, 1967:13)

Fanon argued further that language was the “arsenal of complexes that has been developed by the colonial environment” (p.23) for “the amputation of ... being” (p.17). They suggest that, within that discourse, the colonial subject is not seen as “having a language” (Painter, 2010).

This suggests, legislating the language of the colonizer as the language of instruction represents an attempt to reconstruct the ‘beings’ of the colonised. ‘Postcolonial psychology’ describes the replacement of indigenous languages by the languages of colonizers as *linguistic imperialism* - an important component of colonialism (Macleod & Bhatia, 2008:581). Concerning the use of English for education in colonies Glowacka and Boos (2002:295) described English “as colonizer: stealer of dreams, swallower of identities” which contributes to the silencing of a people; the erasure of an identity; and,

the cutting of a tongue. Irvin & Gal, 2000:38) suggested that legislating one language constitutes *erasure*: the process, in which ideology simplifies the sociolinguistic field, renders some persons and their sociolinguistic existence invisible or less important.

Johnson (2000:177) argued that, to impose a language is to radically remove a significant and powerful dimension of personal and social identity. They suggest that the use of English as language of instruction in other countries constitutes both erasure of local languages and the sustenance of colonial linguistic regimes that influence legislation of foreign languages. Many have argued this point that educational language choice is neither neutral nor separable from issues of power and ideological constructions because it simultaneously promotes and legitimates access to social and economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Heller, 1990;).

Critical pedagogy theorists take the point about legislating language of instruction further. They argue that legislating a particular way that reading or writing must be taught in school instantiates power asymmetries (for teachers and students) in which to be illiterate, was not only to lack the skills of reading and writing; it was to feel powerless and dependent in a much more general way as well (Freire, 1972; Collins & Blot, 2003). Writers argue that the question of linguistic capital also determines teacher student relationships in the school classroom (Ochs, 1993; Fang, 2005; Olitsky, 2008). They argue that use of foreign language for instruction places limitations on students' 'talk'. This interrelation between language and power has been made apparent in the works of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969). They suggest that particular language forms establish relations of domination and constructs meaning for individuals and groups.

Bhat (2008:2) presents the point clearer by arguing that in India that, the legislation of English as medium of instruction represents a "logical and structural dominance of one language over the other, the standard over the non-standard". In parallel, this would suggest that using English as medium of instruction in Ghana is an ideological de-legitimation of indigenous languages, cultures and the identities of students. Bhat (2008) explained that promoting a specific language is to promote particular 'systems

of thought' or 'systems of belief'. Bhat (2008) pointed to language as a great force of socialisation, integrated component of culture, symbol of social and cultural identity, a mode of communication and representation. Bhat explained that in stashing the standard, language as a marker of identity becomes problematic because the standard is drawn upon to re-shape realities, beliefs and worldviews as well as act as a tool for complete social control.

Smith (2005:2) suggested that language (both written and spoken) is "key to the ... discovery of how institutions are coordinated". In terms of the school curriculum, Bhabha (2004:146) described the English (text)Book (the Bible) that Christian missionaries used in colonial schools served as "an insignia for colonial authority and a signifier of colonial desire and discipline". Bhadha continued to argue that

The immediate vision of the book figures those ideological correlatives of the Western sign – empiricism, idealism, mimeticism, monoculturalism (to use Edward Said's term) – that sustain a tradition of English "cultural" authority' (p.150).

Painter (2010) argued that much of the colonial linguistic regimes have been kept in place by postcolonial governments on the logic of nationalism. However, Painter argued that (post)colonial subject is often caught in a (politically mediated) *existential contradiction*. Painter explained that the postcolonial cultural elite who retain colonial language regimes have reproduced privilege through patterns of class closure, often cashing in on the accumulated linguistic capital. The colonial languages continue to be used as instruments of racialisation and marginalisation (Painter, 2010). The critiques of Derrida (1998) explained this idea by arguing that colonialism invested indigenous people with its contradictory desires of differentiation and inclusion in territorial dramas in which the role and status of native populations (and the native subject) were always contested. The colonial subject came to stand in a different relation to language than the cultural citizen of the colonizing state. For example, in this research my (English) language expressions would be measured on the standards of the 'native' English speaker.

Ghana is one country where the language (English) of the colonizer has been retained as language of instruction despite several debates (see Graham, 1971; GES, 2001; MOE, 2004; Mfum-Mensah, 2005; Owu-Ewie, 2006; Quartey, 2007; Seidu et al., 2008). Esteva (2004) contends that teaching in foreign language – as is the case of English in Ghana – is capable of radically uprooting students from their ancestry because language also embodies the cultural and historical heritage of a people. Esteva's argument will suggest that the language of instruction has important consequences for student identity in school. However, students direct experiences with English as the Medium of instruction in Ghana is less visible in the literature on schooling in Ghana today. This thesis explored the use of English language of medium of instruction in Chapter Six in order to add to what we know about school language and the formation of identities in school.

2.5.2 School Culture and identities

This section looks at how school cultural regimes are implicated in the production identities. Cultural geographers eulogise “empirical support” for culture as underlying institutional identities (Rosenholtz, 1989:2; Baldwin et al., 1999; Escobar, 2001). Bolman and Deal (1991) view *culture* as both product (the accumulated history and practices) and a process (constantly renewed and recreated by existential circumstances). In this thesis I take the view of *culture* as aspects of the institution that are less visible, less openly acknowledged, constitute a largely hidden agenda although inextricably linked to formal, organisational structures of schooling (Watson & Ashton, 1995; Stoll & Fink, 1996). As Parker (2000) argues, informal institutional interactions set up expectations and constraints. The argument is that membership of institutions embodies performing certain *social acts* and verbally displaying certain *stances* (Ochs, 1993). By *social acts*, I mean socially recognised, goal directed behaviour, such as students raising hands before talking, asking permission before going out. By *stances*, I mean a display of socially recognised points of view or attitudes, whether epistemic or affective (Besnier, 1990). Proponents argue that school members may use cultural acts and stances to construct not only their own identities but those of other interlocutors (Ochs, 1993).

Illich (1971) argued that school cultural practices teach students to know their place and to sit still in it. Rwomire (1998:8) argued further that cultural apparatuses, usually operationalised through the hidden curriculum and social practices infantilise students in knowledge construction. Freire (1993) highlights this in terms of “oppressor and oppressed” states of domination. Freire’s notion of oppressor-oppressed relationship is a condition that produces different kinds of identities in knowledge construction. First, it involves *prescription*, which involves teachers peddling what Bernstein (2000) described as ‘official pedagogic discourse’ as both the norm and the standard for occluding particular identities or ways of behaving, of constructing knowledge and, of understanding (Freire, 1993:29). The argument is that, in the normalising school curriculum, *students* are pedagogically conceptualised as *empty vessels* into which standardised materials (textbook knowledge that is fixed) are poured (Harber, 2004). Anti-colonialists critique such practices as premised in Heydon’s (1984) perceptions that a *child’s* powers of observation are less reliable than an *adult’s* because *children* are prone to live in a make believe world; *they* are egocentric, suggestible and sometimes behave in a way evil beyond *their* years. Freire’s description of prescription highlights how it re-construction of identities:

transforming the consciousness of the person prescribed to into one that conforms to the prescriber’s consciousness. Thus, the behaviour of the oppressed is a prescribed behaviour, following as it does the guidelines of the oppressor (Freire, 1993:27)

Second, the oppressor-oppressed relationship produces “sub-oppressors” (Freire, 1993:27) who suffer identity crisis:

The very structure of their thought has been conditioned by the contradictions of the concrete, existential situation by which they were shaped ... Their ideal is ... [to] adopt an attitude of “adhesion” to the oppressor ... Their perception of themselves as oppressed is impaired by their submersion in the reality of oppression.

This complexity of institutions is an important element of the research presented here and some sub-oppressors including teachers, prefects and seniors-on-duty and their part in the Ghanaian context are discussed in Chapter Five. Freire (1972) argues, as did Said (1978), that these sub-oppressors adapt to the structures of domination,

resign to it in a self-regulating manner implore others to do same. So long as they feel incapable of running the risk required to challenge their oppression they follow school rules and monitor others to do so. However, much of how this plays out in school and the social consequences are less known in the literature.

Using the case of Ghana, Agbenyega (2008:58) suggested that there is “connectivity between the school place, pedagogy, identity forms and learning”. He did not explain this relationship much, rather he links school regimes and identities about which little is known. He draws on James et al. (1998) to suggest that “irrespective of children’s own agency, potential and competence in creating positive cultural identities, place factors beyond their control can shape their lives in negative ways.” He identified these place factors as “aversive control of students, coupled with transmission pedagogy”. He argued that “in a school place ... students may experience a diminishing sense of themselves on the conditions needed to create a welcoming and progressive school community.” He asserted that this place factors tend to damage “the sense of community and identities” because it does not allow relationships that “enable people to define themselves and to share experiences with others and form themselves into communities” (Crang, 1998:103).

As such, anti-colonial analysis takes school culture and social relationships seriously as key factors involved in the production of student identities. They see school religious practices under colonialism as an important political, social, and economic force by placing the issue squarely in the context of ecclesiology – the relationship between the church and modern civilization, which was a major aspect of the colonial agenda (see Thomas, 2001). Commentaries highlighting the selective use of mission schooling to reshape social life to the detriment of Indigenous education are not hard to find (see for example, Dougall 1930; Mumford 1930; Eiselen 1934; Hoernl’e 1931; Krige, 1937; Rattray 1932; Brenner, 2007). Brenner (2001) discussed how severe religious imposition through schools was designed with the attempt to control culture and to control knowledge in West Africa during colonization. Brenner used the case of Mali and argued that it was in opposition to French colonial authority that the first medersas

(Muslim schools) and voluntary associations appeared. Some argue that schools' 'religified' norms (Levtzion & Pouwels, 2000; Stambach, 2010) which subordinate local cultural codes and forms of knowing "to connections among religion, opportunity, and education" (Stambach, 2010:362).

Stambach also see Muslims' civic underrepresentation as evidence of "Christianized schooling". From these historical connections associating schools in Africa with European Christian missions, Stambach suggested that the present EFA mechanism of social inclusion and reform should regard religious practices in the cultural codes of schooling as a part of the problem in the first place. Bowie (2000) equally suggested that religious-based social stratification is attributable to Christianised schooling that persisted after colonialism. The suggestion in the works discussed in these latter paragraphs is that religious legacies embedded in school cultural codes have important implications for achieving EFA goals. The suggestion is that religious practices in schools turn to marginalise certain identities and occlude them. In Ghana, for example, we know that there was a legislation that,

religion should be put on either the first or the last period on the school timetable so that parents who did not want their children to study Religion could withdraw them from the class during the lesson period (MOE Report, 1957:10).

Since then, however, there is little understanding of how schooling addresses, for example, religious plurality or discrimination (Asare-Danso, 2008). This leaves much to explore on religion and identity formation in schooling, which this research partly explored in Chapters Five; and, more in Section 7.2.2 of Chapter Seven.

2.5.3 Gender identities in schooling

Foucault (1976), in particular, argues that "an integral part of the strategies that underlies and permeates" school discourses are the silences and absences of discussions of the ways in which the institution reproduces gender constructions in society (Foucault, 1976:27). He explains that arrangements of institutions and the broader panoptical modes of surveillance embodied in the architecture of schools shows that the organisers took gender permanently into account.

In addressing the reproduction of gender violence in schools, Amnesty International (2008:1) wrote that “schools reflect wider society” and cites the example that “the same forms of violence which women suffer throughout their lives – physical, sexual and psychological – are present in the lives of girls in and around schools”. Also, research by Parkes and Heslop (2011) under the international cliché about ‘safe schools for girls’ suggests that pathological identities are reproduced through the institution of schooling. The corollary has been helpful gender analysis that have contributed much to understanding EFA goals (Odhiambo & Maganya, 2004; Dunne et al., 2006).

However, the literature is replete with discussion of identities that criticize traditional sex-based gendered analyses as essentialising (Foucault, 1995; Sunderland, 2000; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003). Butler’s work on gender trouble provides ontological critique of sex-gender categories and presents the strong case that recognizes difference across many spatial scales and time. Butler (1990) cites subversion, regulation and embodiment of gender to show how the sexualised cartographies can no longer used as a stable point of departure in the analysis of gendered identities. Following on Butler, the considerable amount of work on what Thorne (1993) called ‘borderwork’ undertaken in schooling showed that male-female “borders are regularly challenged and transgressed” (Nayak & Kehily, 2008:119). Also, Skeggs (1991:130) ethnographic work in Britain argues that where sexuality is concerned “students are not rendered totally powerless”. The study suggested that masculinity has, institutional basis and can be experienced as “fun, empowering and pleasurable”. Skeggs (1997:120-121) notes that gender is a “reiteration produced through institutional organisation and discourse, epistemologies and practices”. From ethnographic observations of gender practices amongst elementary school children (aged 9-10 years) in North America, Thorne (1993) recognised that boys and girls do not perpetually engage in the enactment of opposite ‘sex roles’. Thorne advised that analysis of gender in school should focus upon the variety of situated relationships between students in classrooms, playgrounds and school corridors. Thorne argues that gender boundaries may be demarcated through dress, jokes and a host of discursive cultural activity. Thorne used the term ‘border crossing’ to make the point that gender

difference can be re-shaped, devaluated and unmade. Connell (2002) adds a further argument that gender, even in its most elaborate forms is always an “accomplishment” and not fixed. From a longitudinal study of Australian schools and students, McLeod and Yates (2006:91) suggested that young people’s subjective approach to gender is a generative account of being in the world. They argued that gender in young peoples’ school experiences can only be made sense of when situated in the context of the variety of relationships they engage in (see also Nayak & Kehily, 2008:117). This research explores broad student identities in Chapter Seven.

In Ghana, and elsewhere, there is lots of literature explaining that schools cannot be ignored as part of the gender order and they are not immune to being used as institutions for the regulation and (re)production of gender identities (Avortri et al., 2000; Coclough et al., 2003; Dunne et al., 2005a; Parkes & Heslop, 2011; Parkes et al., 2013). Nayak and Kehily (2008:98) view the modern institution of schooling “as sites where particular technologies for gender production are in occurrence”. They maintain that schools are masculine spaces “connected to a web of local and global flows” in which gender formations “is subject to state governmentality” (p.97-98). They argued that there are direct relationships between school and the nation state that does not allow students to challenge the popular culture that is trans-imposed on them through schooling.

The literature from some African writers - Filomena Steady (1987), Ifi Amadiume (1987), Ayesha Imam (1997), Molaria Ogundipe-Leslie (1994), Amina Mama (1995), Oyeronke Oyewùmí (1997), and Assitan Diallo (2004), among others - help map out the history and contemporary understandings of femaleness in Africa. Their writings have provided criticisms of mainstream feminists’ assumptions of gender problems in Africa and what Beoku-Betts (2005) would describe as Western perceptions of African Women in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries. Oyewùmí (1997), in particular, provided in-depth anti-colonial critique of views that position African women as nothing more than victims of oppressive cultural practices. She suggests that such analysis ignores, for example, missionary and colonial heritages that have reduced

African women to the margins of society by encouraging their subordination in all spheres of society. Oyewùmí (1997:156) argued that, gender dynamics in Africa “exists, albeit in concatenation with the reality of separate and hierarchical sexes imposed during the colonial period”. Oyewùmí (1997:123-125) further argued that “the emergence of women as an identifiable category, defined by their anatomy and subordinated to men in all situations” was “one of the very first accomplishments of the colonial state.” Oyewùmí further asserts that colonization was a twofold process of “inferiorization and gender subordination” of women. She asserts that African males accepted the established Western gender norms and colluded with the inferiorization of females in all aspects of life including schools where “the exclusion of women” became natural and immutable (Oyewùmí, 1997:123). Lugones (2008:8) suggests sex-gender categories were introduced in colonised societies “by the West as a tool of domination that designates two binarily opposed and hierarchical social categories”. These gendered practices inscribed through official curriculum organisation makes it possible for students to acquire gendered behaviours including modes of dressing, and of inspecting that people dress-up properly, for example.

Studies suggest students try to resist, challenge and overturn their gender positions in ways that produce gender power between students and teachers but, entrenched hidden curriculum practices provide spaces where ideas about gender learning are processed, contested and culturally re-imagined (Dunne et al., 2005a; Nayak & Kehily, 2008). One argument is that the institution of schooling has a gender regime where students must learn to speak and act in ways becoming of adulthood. Acting like an adult, Nayak and Kehily (2008:92) explained, includes “above all, an *embodied display* of knowledge”. This involves “holding oneself differently and speaking in a dignified, measured tone that is distinguishable from ‘childish’ idle chatter”. Maturation is measured by “competent performance” of “adult masculinity or femininity substantiated through the enactment of ... bodily iterations”. These actions require children to practice and ceaselessly rehearse what we may consider in Beidelman’s (1997) terms to be a whole way of life. This suggests the construction of ‘normals’ to which all must aspire. As Foucault (1988) argued, these ‘normals’ become the accepted standards of

competent performance and a set of formal prohibitions that produce an incitement to discourse. In that sense, reproduction of gender is cast as the responsibility that both teachers and students have to the state.

2.6 Summary

Although many theoretical conceptions simply conceptualised schooling as a given good, the anti-colonial discursive framework (CADF) view schools as colonial institutions in terms of its hierarchical organisation and practices that facilitate control over knowledge. In this chapter, I suggest CADF proponents argue that power and knowledge regimes in school make students become subjects of school discipline implemented by teachers. They suggest that school curriculum in developing countries is planned – pre-determined and behaviourist in outcome - and most of what is learnt is designed to serve the needs of global agendas because local knowledge remains outside the curriculum. This detachment of knowledge from local needs is criticised as epistemic and characteristic of the colonial school curriculum that also used foreign language as medium of instruction to the consistent disadvantage of the local language. As such, the colonial nature of schools as a site with regulatory regimes that are implicated in the production of centre-periphery identities persists. In particular, students become constrained actors - docile school members controlled at every level of task, activity and interaction - and passive receivers of packaged knowledge that is pre-determined in the national curriculum and delivered through performance modes of knowledge production where teachers are authoritarian transmitters. From this background, the next section explores the Ghana specific literature because of the propositions that “African countries are still influenced by their colonial history” (Verger et al., 2012:126).

CHAPTER THREE

SCHOOLING IN GHANA

3.1 Introduction

This Chapter explores the country-specific literature on schooling in Ghana. Its structuring is largely influenced by the education debates explored in the last chapter. I explored schooling in Ghana drawing on the historical and contemporary literature to contextualise the research. I begin by exploring historical and ‘colonial’ roots of schooling in Ghana, because of the education debates suggesting that ex-colonies retain the school practices that were current centuries ago. The first section traces the origins of schooling in Ghana. The second explores the literature on schooling under British colonialism. The third reviews efforts made to de-colonise education during the immediate post-colonial era. The fourth section examines schooling reforms in the post-Nkrumah era. The fifth reviews contemporary empirical research to highlight the gaps that exist.

3.2 Historical context: Origins of schooling in Ghana

The literature on pre-colonial schooling in Ghana explains that Ghanaian communities prepared their members through informal systems of education (Busia, 1964; Graham, 1971; McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975). They argued that the school was the home: the teachers were the parents and the elders in the family; the curriculum was life and learning was by observation and practice. The purpose was the inculcation of good character and adequate knowledge of the history, beliefs and culture that enabled children to participate fully in social life. As Tafa (2002:23) explains, “There is no evidence to suggest that children were flogged every step of the way”. Indigenous languages were used for instruction in the indigenous knowledge (culture traditions, history and artisanal skills/trades of the communities (Owu-Ewie, 2006).

Dei (2002:5) explained that the “primary characteristics of Indigenous knowledges are that they are personal/personalized, (i.e., there are no claims to universality); trust in knowledge is tied instead to integrity and the perceptiveness of the ‘speaker’.” He

added that knowledge was “orally transmitted, and their sharing is directly related to considerations of the responsibility in the use of received knowledge.” Instruction in Indigenous knowledges is experientially-based because knowledge was regarded as fluid and “tested in the rigorous laboratory of survival” (Hunn 1993:13). The purpose of instruction was to give adequate knowledge of their history, beliefs and culture, thus enabling the ‘students’ to participate fully in social life; and the inner workings of the self to generate social interpretations, meanings and explanations (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, 1975; Dei, 2002). Things changed following the colonial encounters with Western European traders and missionaries.

European traders and their missionary workers started schools in their respective castles to educate their children. The Portuguese are known to have started the first castle school at Elmina Castle around 1529. The Dutch who evicted them from the castle opened their own school in 1644, which ran for 200 years. The British opened their school at the Cape Coast Castle while the Danes opened their school at Christiansburg Castle, Accra (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975). These schools “were not established to benefit the natives” (GES, 2001:6). The “qualified” students who attended these schools were *mullatoes*: children born to Ghanaian mothers by European fathers (Graham, 1971:1, 3). Each school was organised differently because no central co-ordinating body existed (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975). The various European groups used their home languages - Portuguese, Dutch, Danish and English - for instruction in their respective schools (Graham, 1971; Quartey, 2007).

Christian missionaries are credited with expanding schooling, albeit to “serve the primary needs of evangelism” (Amedahe & Chandramohan, 2009:8) and their national colonial agenda because the traders and missionaries were protected by military attaches from their home countries (Dei et al., 2006; Quartey, 2007). The literature suggests that their curriculum sought to produce students who could read and write the particular European language of the mission group and adhere to their religious values (Graham, 1971; Quartey, 2007). Portuguese, Dutch, Danish and English were used as media of instruction wherever the Portuguese, the Dutch, the Danes and the English

respectively were in control of education. The content of schooling was religious values (Pfann, 1965; Debrunner, 1967) and the Bible was the main textbook (Antwi, 1991). As Pfann (1965:45) noted, “nuns, missionary wives and children imparted their Christian beliefs, practices and values to their students”. The ‘native girls’ “were trained as good servants and housewives, but above all for the Lord” (Debrunner, 1967:149-150; Pfann, 1965:23). Girls were trained in needle work or sewing and educated to become celibate while carpentry, masonry, blacksmithing, shoemaking were organised for boys (Debrunner, 1967). This practice is usually cited as the beginning of formal gender divide into schooling.

A historical study (Quartey, 2007) explained that missionary schooling involved marginalizing relational complexities; the articulation of colonial values and cultural symbolisms of power; and imposition of European ideals. School practices were dominated by the missionary teachers’ national values and beliefs: “the moral codes they cast, their religious ambitions” (Quartey, 2007:8). According to Quartey, missionary educational practices included

types of discourse and actions that touch on the articulation of values, thought, ethnography and cultural symbolisms that express power relationships between the missionaries and the local inhabitants... their diverse practices can be grounded in the causality of race, gender, space, and temporality arising from the confrontations between imperial and local cultural identities (Quartey, 2007:8).

Other commentaries on missionary schooling in Ghana explained that their practices had undertones of a *civilizing mission*: missionary teachers applied their cultural principles in all educational activities to orient students to the values of particular European nations they came from (Pfann, 1965; Debrunner, 1967; Antwi, 1991; Bassey, 1999a; Dei et al., 2006). Missionary teachers positioned themselves in the predominant concept of a ‘divine right’ by doubling as the mouthpiece of God to prohibit students from challenging their practices (Pfann, 1967).

Also, corporal punishment “using canes and whips were institutionalised in schools ... and most missionary teaching promoted its use among parents” (Durrant & Smith,

2011:67). Luggard (1922) argued that the British colonial administration, which later harmonised the school system in Ghana, inherited “communities whose standards have been moulded by centuries of Christian ethics” (Luggard, 1922:432). These comments tell the ‘successes’ of Christian missionary impact on the Ghanaian population. It suggests that Ghanaian cultures have been influenced and moulded by missionary religious codes. He justified the use of corporal punishment as important for the formation of character. This was not challenged in Britain because English law at the beginning of colonialism supported whipping (Radzinowicz & Hood, 1986).

Writing from other contexts, Pennycook and Makoni (2005) argued that ‘the language effects’, of missionary activates evident in many indigenous languages teetering on the brink of extinction. They argued, as Bhabha (1990) did, that the missionary textbook – the Bible – whether translated into other languages, propagated by Dutch or native catechists, is still the English book that was crucial in facilitating internalisation of the logic of colonial governmentalities. It inaugurated cultural authority which began the singularising logic of language, of writing, of the Word, as both cultural belonging and political destiny (Painter, 2010). This begun the moment where hetero-linguistic domains were transformed into what Derrida (1998) calls the ‘monolingualism of the Other’. Monoligualism meant that one language (English, as in the case of Ghana) is promoted as the language of schooling, the language for documenting knowledge and the language to be read in books. Painter (2010) argued that these missionary education mores laid the foundations from where in the mid-nineteenth century onwards, comparative philology, established language as *the* site for defining, through a process of ‘evolutionary recovery’, the range of ethnic, racial and national genealogies that was supposed to define the colonised people in relation to Europe. These missionary mores were popularised by their “scientific heirs, philologists and ethnologists”, who secularised and collectivised salvation by casting it in terms of civilisation that discredited the identities, practices and languages of the natives as crude and backward. We can thus speak of the language effects, not only of Christianity or even colonialism, but of European modernity more broadly. The next section explores schooling during British colonialism in Ghana.

3.3 British colonial education in Ghana (1852-1952)

A national study (GES, 2001) dates British colonial control of schooling in Ghana to their Education Ordinance in 1852, which was intended to address the “shortcomings” of the education system at that time (GES, 2001:6). The stated objective of schooling at the time was to produce a group of “scholars that would provide the needed manpower requirements for merchant houses and clerks for the civil service and missionary workers” (GES, 2001:7). However, writers suggested that the institution was used to promote colonial domination (Busia, 1964; Rwomire, 1998; Woolman, 2001:29). Busia (1964:7), for example, argued that schools “largely functioned to maintain the colonial order of dependency” and provided “cut-rate education” below British metropolitan standards.

In a scathing analysis of the impact of British colonial education, Rwomire (1998:19) argued that the school curriculum was used as a tool for imperial domination and economic exploitation. Rwomire noted that schooling under British colonialism was characterized by irrelevant curricula that did not address the needs of society, and which caused a number of undesirable effects including economic inequality, social stratification, cultural and intellectual servitude and devaluation of traditional culture. Rwomire (1998:8) added that many graduates became “docile, dependent, low on initiative, and immoral” because the curriculum was “predominantly academic and elitist” (Dzobo, 1987:2).

The system of schooling promoted British racial superiority as local languages and history were neglected from the curriculum (Ajayi et al., 1996; Woolman, 2001). For example, the use of indigenous languages for instruction was identified by the main shortcoming of the education system and they were abolished as “inadequate” teaching media (Bamgbose, 2000; Owu-Ewie, 2006). The curriculum subjects included

Reading and Writing of the English Language, Arithmetic and in the case of girls, Needle work. English Grammar, English History, and Geography could be taught at the option of the teacher (Report of the Educationist Committee, 1920:18).

Proficiency in English language became the indicator of good education (Antwi, 1992; Quartey, 2007). The curriculum was reviewed to comprise English Reading, English Writing, Arithmetic and *Religious Instruction* (Wise, 1956:9) when missionaries of the British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel protested that “Religious teaching should form part of school life” (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975:57).

Antwi (1992:33) criticized the curriculum as irrelevant: “the education system was devoid of the economic, social and political needs of the local people”. Woolman (2001) and Busia (1967) suggested that British colonial school system in Ghana produced three nations – educated, the half educated and the uneducated - in one country. These three groups they suggested are always in conflict because each group is unable to communicate effectively with the others because they have developed different perceptions of life. Busia (1964:7) and Moumouni (1968) further suggested that school practices inculcated Eurocentric values including egocentric materialism and individualism in the educated. The educated became a “misfit in his own village” (Mazrui, 1978:16) because such characteristics which they were oriented, contradict African sense of collective responsibility in addition to undermining traditional societies (Woolman, 2001).

As identified by studies in other former British colonies - Barbados, (Anderson & Payne, 1994), Kenya (Human Rights Watch, 1999:7-8), Botswana (Tafa, 2002) - the school system adopted what is described as “nineteenth century British traditions of school discipline, including the widespread use of the cane” (Human Rights Watch, 1999:7-8). In relation to Ghana, Killingray (1994) explained that caning was used as ‘the rod of empire’ by which colonial teachers controlled students. Luggard (1922:560) justified corporal punishment with the distasteful notion that “the primitive African does not feel” the pain. He depicted, native children as “nude savage children” acting with “inaccessible fastness of a cannibal” and so, required the “formation of character” (p.217).

A fundamental problem in the British colonial education system was the neglect of schooling in rural areas because the political and economic superstructure of the colonial system directed investment to the well-endowed regions (Bening, 1990:251). Also, “pauper children” were not allowed in schools until a new Education Ordinance (No. 14 of 1887) was passed (GES, 2001:6). This could also be explained as the beginning of educational disadvantages for the poor although the exact meaning of pauper children was not clarified in the text the Ordinance.

The mission report of the Phelps-Stokes Fund of America (1920) found that teachers were not professional and their practices such as corporal punishment did discouraged schooling. Besides, many Ghanaians were excluded from schooling because universal schooling was not encouraged as the colonial government was more interested in investing resources in re-building British economy after World War I. Later, in the 1925 Phelps-Stokes Commission Report on Education in Africa (Stambach, 2010) Anson Phelps Stokes - the president of the funding agency- writes that “the modern Christian missionary has been in Africa, as elsewhere, the advance agent of civilization” (p. xv). Following from this Phelps Stokes suggested, less for introducing new beliefs concerning the existence of God than for their use of discipline, logic, and reason to address Africans’ practical needs. The report advised that henceforth, following science not religion will guide education planning.

In order to develop this new focus, the literature suggest that “the Phelps-Stokes Commission called on social scientists, including anthropologists, to provide information” about the “Native population” (Stambach, 2010:363). Stambach further suggests that this “Ethnological information was intended to assist in adapting European methods to local conditions and to produce a new class of vocationally skilled Africans.” In contrast with the vision of building new knowledge production on science than religion, Christian missionaries were called upon to promote the “the displacement of religion by scientific method”. This advice was later to be manipulated by Malinowski (1963), described in the anthropological literature as the “chief representative of functionalist anthropology to colonial administrators.

Malinowski suggested unabashed Eurocentric ideas that represent an affront to today's sensibilities and represent "a key point for understanding the salvational overtones of functionalism in relation to schooling and development policy." Malinowski (1936) suggested that anthropologists should research what aspect of Indigenous education might help Africans adjust to colonialism (see Stambach, 2010:363). First, Malinowski equated Christian schooling with social development by defining schooling as the process "to give the Native unstintingly our knowledge and our Christianity" and to enabling Africans to claim "full citizenship and ... personal dignity" (p.484). Second, he suggested that "the Native" might be schooled in "inverted anthropology" by which Africans would learn the habits and norms of Europeans (including Europeans' propensity to preach one thing but then do otherwise (p.503-4). He further suggested that, in process of devolution of power from Britain to Native Administrators, Colonial administrators use this inverted anthropology to train African students and teachers as a way in which anthropologists might inform policy long after colonialism. Finally, Malinowski suggested that colonial educators should school Africans in a manner that did not undermine aspects of traditional "age grades or chieftainships" (p.513). Years after the Phelps-Stokes Commission report, Malinowski (1936:497-98) described some of the impacts of his insistence of religified schooling:

one of the symptoms which shocked me was the fact that everywhere there existed this profound rift between the Christian and non-Christian section of every tribe. At a dance there would be a group of people standing aside, looking on with keen interest and yet contemptuous, with envy and yet with a show of superiority - these were the Christians ... On the social side it [this rift] means that a modernized African child develops a contempt for his African peers.

As the report suggests, Malinowski's ideas led to social rifts and identity dislocations in the colonial society. Some have suggested that Malinowski's ideas did not only promote these cultural dislocations, but also became the basis for religious intolerance and the marginalisation of non-Christian religions. In fact, Stambach (2010) who is a staunch opponent of the ideas espoused by Malinowski, criticized him as suggesting that the imperial project of colonialism should be "forged in the instructional mode: through a combination of working on and through existing pedagogical methods and in introducing new ideas directly, including didactically through schooling" (Stambach,

2010:364). As such, the recommendations of the Phelps-Stokes Commission got subverted, rather than implemented in post-War British colonial education policy.

The GES (2001) noted that only 6.6% of the population of Ghanaian school-aged children were in school at the time the nation gained self-rule. The discussion in the next section addresses schooling reforms implemented when Ghana gained self-rule.

3.4 De-colonising education: Schooling reforms in post-colonial Ghana

Ghana's education system underwent enormous policy changes aimed at undoing the legacies of colonial domination (GES, 2001). The first nationalist government (1951-1969) led by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah (an African nationalist, a staunch opponent of Western imperialism and colonialism) approached schooling with the ideas of decolonisation (GES, 2001). By *decolonisation* I mean a departure from colonial systems of thought (Busia, 1964), and challenging "the political economy of knowledge production" that accords legitimacy to certain forms of knowledge and knowing (Dei, 2000a:129) and reclaiming Indigenous knowledge, cultures, languages, values, and worldviews and re-positioning them as an integral part of the education system (Dei, 2000a, 2000b; Adjei, 2007). For Nkrumah

This does not mean that western techniques and methods are not applicable to Africa. It does mean, however, that in Ghana we must look at every problem from the African point of view ... Our whole educational system must be geared to producing a scientifically-technically minded people. Because of the limitations placed on us, we have to produce, of necessity, a higher standard of technical education than is necessary in many of the most advanced countries of the Western world ... (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975:94)

As such, education reforms under Nkrumah sought to place direct value on systems of thought that were marginalized under colonialism (Parliamentary Debates Official Report, 1961). Parliamentary Debates Official Report (1961:17) highlighted that the Nkrumah government implemented an "an aggressive programme of rapid expansion of education" (see also GES, 2001:7). The report suggested that the Nkrumah government promoted formal education on the grounds that, "it is only through universal education that we can give our people the full opportunity to develop their latent abilities and intelligence." The policy statement, *Accelerated Development Plan*

(ADP) for Education, 1951, linked schooling with the “the importance of education to the development of the individual in particular and the society in general” (GES, 2001:8). From a de-colonial perspective, Nkrumah promoted formal education as the 'key that unlocks the door to modernisation' (Graham, 1971) but equally argued that, “education must not alienate the educated from their social environment and their people” (Parliamentary Debates Official Report, 1961:17).

Adjei (2007) explained that efforts were made to re-design the school system and curricula based on ideas of decolonisation, which also covers the ideas of inter- and intra-culturalism, plurilingualism, productive education, and communitarian education. The subjects taught at the primary school were reviewed to include:

Personal Hygiene, Village Sanitation, English, Writing, Arithmetic, Physical Education, Games, Hygiene, Religious Instruction, Ghanaian Languages, Nature Study, Geography, History, Centres of Interest, Music, Art & Crafts, Needlework, African Drumming and Dancing (MOE Report, 1957:8).

Ghanaian language was revived as a medium of instruction (Seidu et al., 2008). Nkrumah introduced a Second Development Plan (1959-1964) that placed value on skill development (Parliamentary Debates Official Report, 1961). The supporting Education Act, 1961 (Act 87) prescribed 10 years of free compulsory elementary education for all children of school going age. As indicated in Table 3.1 over 500% growth in enrolment occurred between 1961 and 1966.

Table 3.1: Expansion in Education from 1951 to 1966

School Type	1951		1966		% increase in student enrolment
	No. of Schools	No. of Students	No. of Schools	No. of Students	
Primary	1,083	153,360	8,144	1,137,495	7405
Middle	539	66,175	2,277	267,434	404
Secondary	13	5,033	105	42,111	836
Teacher Training	22	1,916	83	15,144	790
Technical	5	622	11	4,956	797
University	2	208	3	4,291	2062

Source: B. K. Hayford (1988:35) Social Studies for Junior Secondary Schools, CRDD Accra

However, Ghanaian languages were used for instruction for the first year classes between 1951 and 1956 but not used at all between 1957 to 1966 (Bamgbose, 2000; Owu-Ewie, 2006). Religious instruction was sustained and perpetuated the colonial Christian indoctrination of students (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975:57).

The Kwapong Committee Report (1967) which reviewed Ghana's school system noted that school leavers had no skills because the school system followed the bequeathed colonial tradition. The review argued that the school system retained its colonial elements where the curriculum was more elitist and less focused on addressing national needs such as development of national consciousness, citizenship values, national culture and historical identities etc. It is in this context that the next section reviewed school reforms in the post-Nkrumah era.

3.5 Schooling Reforms in the Post-Nkrumah Era

A Commonwealth review of education in Ghana recorded that after the overthrow of Kwame Nkrumah the new government "streamlined education along the lines of the British Education system and upheld denominational supremacy and character building as the central theme of education" (Amedahe & Chandramohan, 2009:10). The

analysis in the Kwapong Committee Report (1967) mainly recommended two types of schools – secondary schools which were mainly academic in focus and continuation schools which were focused on technical education. It recommended that continuation classes be provided to middle school leavers who could not benefit from secondary school education. They were to acquire practical skills and “the right attitude that would make them ready for absorption into various occupational enterprises or gainful employment” whereas those who excelled academically were to proceed to secondary schools (The Kwapong Committee report, 1967). Later, academic works criticised the post-Nkrumah reforms as creating two classes of students -- ‘failures’ who enrolled in continuation schools as distinct from the ‘academically successful’ who proceeded to secondary schools (Dzobo, 1987; Addae-Mensah et al., 1973). Addae-Mensah et al. (1973) argued that the reform introduced competitive selection examinations which disadvantaged poor rural households. Critical researchers also suggested that education became more elitist, and Ghanaian languages were relegated again from the curriculum between 1967 until the 1970s (Owu-Ewie, 2006; Seidu et al., 2008).

Butler (1984) contended that there was little critical review of the inherited colonial education system as a whole and school practices in particular. Butler and other critics suggest that reported near demise of the school system by the 1980s due to acute deterioration: primary school enrolment dropped from over 2.3 million in 1975 to just over one million, shortage of teachers, and deterioration of school structures (Abdallah, 1986; World Bank, 2004a; Eyiah, 2007, Akyeampong, 2009). Dzobo argued that schooling became

increasingly dysfunctional as it turns out a lot of school leavers who have no marketable skills, neither do they have the mind to go into self-employment ventures. These leavers could see no bright future for themselves and they come to constitute a veritable economic and social problem for our society to solve...’ (Dzobo, 1987:2)

Dei (2004) contended that the first practical attempt to replace the colonial grammar school system was implemented in the education reforms of 1987. Thus the 1987 reform sought to re-orient education to the needs of the country (GES, 2001). The reform purpose was to

restructure [and] re-orient and improve the quality and relevance of the curriculum, moving away from purely academic focus towards one including skills and attitudes development leading to productive activities; ... to decentralise decision-making and supervision from region to the district and circuit levels, and to increase the level of school visitation and supervision. (GES, 2001:9)

Concrete measures to promote gender equity included - the establishment of The Enhanced Community Involvement Initiative, Girls Education Unit, Female Teacher Recruitment and Training Initiative and The Girls' Education Scholarship Scheme among others (Apusigah, 2002; Dei, 2004). Although English retained its place as the language of instruction, Ghanaian languages, Ghanaian culture and technical skills were taught at all levels of the nine years of basic education (MOE, 1996, 1997; Akyeampong, 2009, 2010). Workshops and materials were supplied to all Junior Secondary Schools to support practical work.

Unfortunately, the influence of the IMF which supported the reform derailed much of the prospects of the reform. Whereas the reform purpose was to improve equity and quality, Dei (2004:37) explained that the IMF intervention created conditions for "the reproduction of the social and economic relations in Ghana" and "ensured that the school continued to be a site for reproducing social inequalities". The IMF, through its structural adjustment programme (SAP), demanded a reduced role of the state in running the education system; cost-sharing among parents, the corporate sector and the government (Sardar, 1999; Dei, 2004). The SAP required that "the government freeze teachers' salaries to keep costs down and balance budgets" (Dei 2004:40). As Sardar (1999) and Akyeampong (2010) argued, this requirement that government saves money on teacher salaries cynically served to undermine the morale of teachers and they repeatedly 'walked out' of classrooms. Dei (2004) added that frequent teacher walkouts affected the quality of the educational experiences that most children received, leading to consequential high rates of dropping out particularly among children in rural areas. Students who remained in school needed to take extra private classes where they were made to pay more. The result was "the privatization of the educational system" with attendant "social implications, particularly in terms of

educational equity and accessibility” (Dei, 2004:37). Students were often left in school without learning or stranded when the schools system was shut down. Untrained teachers were recruited to teach, a situation which diluted teacher professionalism and the quality of teaching students received. One of the consequences has been the decline of educational opportunities for the poor, particularly girls who were pulled out of school to support domestic fund raising activities (Apusigah, 2002; Dei, 2004).

As such, Dei (2004) argued that the 1987 reforms sustained social displacements as it ultimately incapacitated the rural parents and their communities and denied them the purported benefits of implementing educational reforms, originally aimed at serving the needs of local peoples. Many village schools experienced a dropout rate of over 40 percent. Most students dropped out because the retrenchment of many professionals as part of the broader structural adjustment programme meant their parents were “unable to pay user and PTA fees and to provide school uniforms, textbooks and exercise books” (Dei, 2004:44-46). He argued further that

The policies of the SAPs further aggravated a deteriorating condition, thus contributing to what was coming to be known as the current crisis in education in Ghana.... The imposition of the SAP led to both the questioning and a hardening of locally held views about the relevance and irrelevance of formal education. ... Some parents question the practical relevance of formal education when jobs for which students have been trained are neither available nor perceived to have immediate bearing on increasing household productivity (Dei, 2004:37, 41).

Although the reform has a gender focus, it is also claimed that gender disparities were rife (Dei, 2004). This is not explained much but some writers argued that the approach to gender was not systematic enough to address broader questions of educational delivery, namely the structures for teaching, learning and administration (Apusigah, 2002; Dei, 2004).

3.6 The 1992 Constitution and Free Compulsory Universal Basic (FCUBE)

Ghana introduced a ten year FCUBE policy as a constitutional requirement following the adoption of the 1992 Constitution (MOE, 1995). This contributed much to enrolment as indicated in Chapter One. However it is argued that the FCUBE contributed little to

improvements in quality of the educational experiences of students (Akyeampong, 2010; Dunne et al., 2010). Returns on primary education appeared negative, (The World Bank, 2004b) due to deterioration of “the quality of schooling” (Canagarajah & Pörtner, 2003:55). Also, the goal of achieving universal basic education for all by 2005 was not achieved (Akyeampong et al., 2007; Adamu-Issah et al., 2007).

The empirical literature, which I return to in Section 3.7, highlights that much effort has been invested to understand the problems of schooling. Dei made the point that:

Colonial education was highly selective and, while the post-independent state attempted to remedy the situation through public policies and discourses that espouse the goals of free and compulsory education for all, these goals have not become a material reality for the significant number of Ghana’s school-age population. Recent governments have not vigorously pursued such policies... Such decisions work against rural dwellers, women and ... groups not in power (Dei, 2004:46)

Implicit in Dei’s statement is that the project of decolonization has not materialized in the sense that the education system is continually embedded in the bequeathed colonial system. Adjei (2007:1047) puts it differently: “despite the attainment of political independence - Ghana’s schooling and education system is still dominated by Euro-American canon, worldview, and epistemology.” He explained that the inability of the school system in Ghana to contextualize standards and excellence to needs and conditions of the local people has resulted in an intelligentsia with little or no relevant skills and knowledge to address needs within their local communities. He argued further – “It is, therefore, not surprising that local students continue to imbibe Western knowledges at the risk of being alienated from their environment, people, and culture” (Adjei, 2007:1048). This critical argument foregrounds the imperative to explore extant practices in Ghanaian schools. To proceed I reviewed the literature on schooling experiences in Ghana as a point of ‘take off’.

3.7 Research on Schooling in Ghana

Much education research have been undertaken in Ghana since independence (e.g. Foster, 1965; Kraft et al., 1995; Canagarajah & Coulombe, 1997; Colclough et al., 2003; Pryor & Ampiah, 2003; World Bank, 2004a; Dunne et al., 2005a; Hashim, 2005;

Adamu-Issah et al., 2007). A country analytic report (Akyeampong et al., 2007¹) reviewed these and other earlier works. It synthesized analysis of evidence on access to Basic Education in Ghana and used this as a basis for outlining areas that need further research. It provided a background of shared knowledge, understandings and research evidence about access to basic education in Ghana. The review started by assessing the impact past and present policies on basic education have made on expanding access and conclude with a number of recommendations for further research on access as well as issues for policy reformulation. This comprehensive review revealed several gaps in our knowledge of what factors and conditions - buildings, curriculum, textbooks, management, teacher quality and motivation of teachers, supervision - produce the patterns and trends in enrolment and attendance which appear to persist in rural areas today. It suggested that “a range of interlocking supply and demand policy driven initiatives” (Akyeampong et al., 2007:85) to create meaningful access especially the most vulnerable and socio-economically deprived children. It highlighted some new priorities and prepared the ground for empirical studies that followed (e.g. Asunka et al, 2008; Akyeampong, 2009; Rolleston, 2009; Alhassan & Adzahlie-Mensah, 2010; Dunne et al., 2010; Ananga, 2011; Akaguri, 2012).

Dei (2004) and Dei et al. (2006) suggest a dearth of knowledge on institutional regimes and their social consequences. They argue that student experiences with territories of difference based on teacher practices, school discipline, class, gender, language, religion, and disability remain largely unexplored. Questions of power, particularly concerning how social geographies are created, occupied, defended and how identities are linked with or alternatively contested in school do not find much expression in the research literature on Ghana. Dei (2004:244) argued for the analysis of students' perspectives because their “awareness of social difference, equity and fairness is significant for rethinking schooling and education”.

¹ The Country analytic review is available at <http://www.create-rpc.org/publications/cars/>

Dei (2004) talked about research neglect of forms of intervention that reproduces the alienation, oppression, marginality and exploitation although patriarchy continues to dominate power relations in African contexts. He argued that “important markers for claiming identity” (p.246) including minority/majority relations based on ethnicity, gender, language, class, religion, and physical (dis)ability are significantly absent from the Ghanaian literature. Reforms sought to rectify differences by creating incentives that diminish cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic backgrounds that have also produce

tension, contestations, contradictions and ambiguities in claiming knowledge about sameness. ... Unfortunately, in contending with the challenges of educational reform, educators and schools often work with a problematic understanding of singular and separate differences (i.e. ethnicity, class, gender, religion, culture) and of the implications of difference for schooling and education. Narrative accounts of teachers, parents and students reflect the struggle of schools to deal with minority education in the light of prevailing discourses of nationhood and citizenship The extent and nature of the problem is revealed, particularly in terms of schools’ desire to accentuate commonalities by denying difference (Dei, 2004:240-241).

A national study (CRDD, 2001) into gender and equity in Ghanaian indicated the perpetuation of structural violence in the formal and informal aspects of school life. The study reported structural violence in school rules and regulations, indoor activities (seating patterns in classroom, class organisation, teaching/learning activities, participation in teaching learning activities, pupil-pupil interactions and competition in class) and outdoor activities (activities engaged in by pupils during break-time, drumming and games). The study argued that schooling appeared to be reproducing stereotypes in Ghanaian society which limits chances for children, especially girls.

Female/male differences do exist in terms of the experiences ... that children suffer. Children also tended to suffer in silence preferring to confine their experiences to friends and their parents rather than teachers for fear of victimisation (CRDD, 2001:57).

The CRDD (2001:5) coined the term “educational apartheid” to describe a condition in which there existed no avenue for students to seek redress in school. According to the CRDD, “silencing” of students by teachers constrained “voicing” of pupils when they were abused or discriminated against (p.59). The “main strategy” adopted by students

“in order to cope with the impact of violations is doing nothing while suffering in silence” (CRDD, 2001:35).

A nationwide sex-fixed gender analysis (Boakye, 1997) into girls' education and the factors that affect it identified poor teacher perception of girls and sexual harassment of girls as constraining females within school. Other studies of gender and exclusion of girls in developing countries including Ghana highlighted male-female dichotomies (Colclough et al., 2003; Dunne et al., 2005a). For example, Dunne et al.'s analysis of six case study schools in Ghana (and Botswana) reported verbal abuse by female teachers and unsolicited physical touch by males on girls as routine schooling practices. They talked about school duties where girls were made to sweep classrooms.

Studies on teacher development and teacher practices in Ghana provided some glimpses into students' experiences that my thesis explored more deeply. Analysis of classroom practices summarised that teachers “dominated all classroom activities ... providing few opportunities for group work and pupil-pupil interactions” (CRDD, 2001: ix). This connects with suggestions from broader access literature reviews that “within the school and classroom there is little or no space for student participation” (Dunne et al., 2007:44-45). Dunne et al. (2005a) reported aggressive classroom interactions where boys dominated classroom spaces. A study (Dunne et al., 2010) on school bullying in Ghanaian secondary schools reported gendered institutional relations. They suggested that males tend to dominate the verbal space in classroom interactions and the physical space around the school. Agbenyega & Klibthong (2011) argued that teacher professional identities in knowledge construction promote students' curriculum invisibility as colonial subjects. Busia (1964), Debrunner (1967) and Mireku et al. (2005) suggested that teachers demand blind conformity and rote learning persists. The delivered curriculum sustains practices akin to the situation where missionary teachers maintained steerage over what is necessary to promote the 'civilisation' students.

A postcolonial analysis of pre-service teachers' professional development and pedagogy in Ghana (Agbenyega & Klibthong, 2011) concluded that teacher

professional identities in knowledge construction promoted students' curriculum invisibility. A quantitative study of teacher absenteeism in Ghana (Asunka et al., 2008) concluded that "service provider absence was a major impediment to effective service delivery" (p.1). The study corroborated earlier reports that Ghanaian children, especially in rural Ghana, spend less than half the official time allotted for learning activities due to teacher absenteeism (Kraft, 1994; World Bank, 2007). The report was that Ghanaian children engaged in learning activities only 39% of the time, and so, do not have enough contact hours with teachers. A case study (Alhassan & Adzahlie-Mensah, 2010) of teacher practices within four schools in rural Winneba, where the thesis's research was conducted, found teachers neither attend regularly nor use instructional hours effectively. It was reported that teachers used students on personal farms during instructional/school hours, particularly during physical education period. Observation of classroom discourses revealed that teaching methods were "couched in authoritarian terms" and "teachers only called pupils to answer questions" (p.17, 12). Teacher feedbacks to students "did not inspire pupils to develop a positive self-image" while mates jeered and laughed such that particular students became "confused, timid and disturbed" (p.18).

Studies argue that violence based on corporal punishment was the main form of discipline in schools and an important aspect of schooling experiences (Agbenyega, 2006; Alhassan & Adzahlie-Mensah, 2010; Ofori et al., 2011; CHRAJ; 2011). The different studies supported findings from Pryor and Ampiah (2003: ix) that "corporal punishment is frequent, routine and not administered according to official guidelines". CHRAJ (2011) reported teachers' disregarded policies on corporal punishment and sometimes injuring students through caning. Alhassan and Adzahlie-Mensah (2010:11) argued that teachers "cane any part" of the students' body "mercilessly". A cross-national survey (Ofori et al., 2011) on corporal punishment reported caning of student during school assembly, laying them on a table or asking the student to bend down to touch his or her toes while being caned. The study reported that the parts of the body teachers cane included the buttocks, palm/hand, back, head, legs/knees/ankle and

finger nails. The punishment was administered on those talking in class, for lateness, disobeying teachers and giving wrong answers in class, and fighting in school or class.

The studies above also revealed that teachers' and head teachers' were favourably disposed to using corporal punishment even if it were banned because they did not seem to possess knowledge of other behaviour modification techniques. Alhassan and Adzahlie-Mensah (2010) reported incidence of teachers engaging in physical exchanges (blows) with some students as an option when students resisted caning as a form of punishment. Alternatively, teachers asked students (aged between 4-12 years) to kneel in the scorching sun for up to thirty minutes, weed bushy plots, scrubbing toilet or urinals as forms of punishment administered to children.

Besides, the violation of students through corporal punishment, the literature on other student experiences is scanty. A historiographic analysis (Asare-Danso, 2008) of religion and schooling in Ghana lamented a lack of research focus on the subject. Asare-Danso argued that there has not been a single specific study on the development of Religious Education in Ghana focused on questioning curriculum content based on Christianity and the use of Bible passages to indoctrinate pupils. The few studies that mentioned religion include Agbenyega's (2006) case study in the Greater Accra region of Ghana in which he reported religious differences as underpinning the reasons for corporal punishment. Also, Ofori et al.'s (2011) national study suggested that future research might look into religion as a factor in the administration of corporal punishment. Their arguments suggested that students who held different religious beliefs were coerced to follow the dominant religious values/practices in school. Alhassan and Adzahlie-Mensah's (2010) case study of rural schools in Winneba revealed that some students dropped out because teachers disregarded their religious beliefs by promoting monotheism within the school. Children from Islamic and traditional religious backgrounds seemed to be 'forced' to worship the Christian way. But, there is very little knowledge about students' perspective on religious regulation in schooling. It was on that ground that my research explored the students' perspectives on their experiences with religious regulation within schooling.

One area of concern in discussions of schooling in Ghana has been 'rurality'. Research on schooling in some rural areas in Eastern region revealed teachers were often unwilling to have children with disabilities in their classes (see Akyeampong et al., 2007; Obeng, 2007). Also, survey reports (Asamani, 2000) showed most schools had no arrangements in place for implementation of special needs policy in schools. He explained that most teachers were reluctant to teach children with special needs. Dei (2004) summarised that despite attempts by post-colonial government in Ghana to address disparities locational differences created by the colonial concentration of schools around major centres remained. Kraft et al (1995) identified differences in aspects of school - buildings, curriculum, furniture, toilets, textbooks, management, teacher quality and motivation of teachers, supervision - in rural areas which appear to persist today. Pryor & Ampiah (2003) explained schooling in the rural area is not of sufficiently good quality to warrant investment of time, energy and economic resources. Hashim (2005) found that in mostly rural areas schooling was not implicated in 'normal' childhood and the inability to attend school was not perceived as an opportunity denied. It is argued that rural children have about 10 times less chance of being enrolled in grade 9 than urban children (Lewin, 2007). The difference regarding the question of rurality in Ghanaian schooling has been mainly attributed to overage enrolment as the mean age for students in Primary one is estimated at 7.5 years (Akyeampong et al., 2007). Writing in another context, Rose (2007) suggested that rural education systems should ultimately blend formal and non-formal components relevant to the realities of its participants lives and needs, flexible and adaptive to changing needs, and accessible to motivated learners of any age or sex. The argument of Rose (2007) was not for rural schooling to be intellectually second-class; but that, it should have its own standards of excellence geared to its different purposes and clienteles and to the circumstances of its society.

Qualitative case studies using ethnographic approaches in rural Ghana point to students referring to schools as, "uninteresting" or "hell" (Obeng, 2002; Pryor & Ampiah, 2003). Obeng's (2002) confessionalist ethnographic study reported that

students referred to school as 'hell' because of experiences with intimidation, humiliation and beatings, which often lead to gradual discouragement from schooling. Pryor and Ampiah (2003: ix) reported that students described school as "uninteresting" because they are "unable to follow the main 'text' of school lessons", particularly when English was used for instruction.

Dei (2004:288) stated that "We need more work to examine the status of educational institutions". Dei suggested that Ghana requires a "fundamental structural change in schools" to acknowledge that identities are linked with schooling and with knowledge production. Dei argued that the question students, teachers and administrators must grapple with is how students negotiate identities at school and within themselves. The point of such arguments is that much of the literature provides little insight into students' experiences of broader school regimes and their in-school identities. Dunne et al. (2010:4) add that there is little research to provide "insight into the quality of educational experiences of students in Ghana". Adjei (2007) argued that there is little research focus on control over what constitutes valid knowledge, which is becoming increasingly and worryingly noticeable in Ghanaian schools. He suggested that the proverbial 'chew and pour' (learning by memorizing) has become the order of learning in schools. Dei added that schools are not analysed as fields where knowledge is transmitted without an individual's sense of "belonging to community with a history and a culture" (Dei, 2004:9). He explained that how the curriculum speaks to fundamental questions of social justice and equity; and the effects of neglecting indigenous knowledge of students are less explored. Quartey's (2007:7) historiographical analysis argued that the regulatory effects of "spaces of exclusion and inclusion or boundaries of identification" which remain contemporary remain largely unexplored. These arguments provide the basis for my four research questions which I discuss in the following section.

3.8 Summary and Research questions

The literature highlights that Ghana's formal education system is a colonial inheritance. From that root, schooling practices include regimes of control over students,

reproduction of knowledge that is prescribed, marginalisation of indigenous knowledge and the use of foreign language (English) for instruction. Although the literature indicates that these practices persist, little is known about the regimes of power in Ghanaian basic schools and how they interface with students' experiences of schooling at the time this research was initiated. One reason for the dearth of such knowledge is what Dunne (2008:49) described as the "dominance of the macro-social plane of vision in research in low income countries and its quantitative methods". This research addresses this gap by exploring students' perspectives on the regimes of power (control) in school and their identities using four main questions:

1. What are the regimes of power in school?
2. What are the students' perspectives on the regimes of power in school?
3. What identities do students develop in relation to the regimes of power in school?
4. How do students negotiate their identities within the regimes of power in school?

The exploration of these questions in a rural Ghanaian Basic School will provide knowledge that will add substantially to what we know about education in Ghana and other developing countries. The institutional ethnography approach which I use to explore student perspectives on the formal and informal regimes and their identities in the research school is explained in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the methodological approach and the methods of data collection and analysis. The concept of methodology and method as delineated by Dunne et al. (2005b) and Pryor (2010) is maintained, wherein methodology encompasses the entirety of the research design including theoretical as well as practical concerns, whilst method represent the specific techniques used to produce data in ways consistent with the methodology.

The chapter is organised into six sections. Section 4.2 explains my institutional ethnography design which ontologically positions *reality* as “contingent, dialogic and context specific” (Dunne et al., 2005b:172) and my attachment to the view that “impersonal ‘objective’ social science research is inadequate to investigate complex social phenomena” (Mander, 2010:252). Section 4.3 discusses the subjectivist’s epistemological approach that questions the notion of absolute *truth* (Usher, 1996; Creswell, 2003; Yin, 2009) why I chose case study; and, presents information on the research school and participants. Section 4.4 explains the methods – interviews, observation and documents analysis – used in data collection. Section 4.5 explicates how I analysed the data - the mosaic of student accounts, my observations and the documentary data. I discuss my ethical practices in Section 4.6 and the questions of researcher identity in 4.7.

4.2 Institutional ethnography

The research was designed and carried out as a case study using institutional ethnography, which “gets assigned to qualitative methods textbooks and courses” (Smith, 2005:2). *Institutional ethnography* follows patterns of ethnographic research designs that are fundamentally intrigued with deconstructing the complexity of social interactions and attributed meanings in a particular locale (Atkinson, et al., 2001; Flick, 2006; Cohen et al., 2011). It “starts from theoretical positions of describing social

realities and their making [and] research questions focus mainly on detailed descriptions of case studies” (Flick, 2006:230).

The distinction is that institutional ethnography is presented by its proponent (Smith 1987, 2005) as not just a methodology, but sociology of ruling relations. Ruling relations are generally explained as “venues where power is generated and perpetuated” (Wright, 2003:244). It explores how daily practices are institutionalised in rules and general relations within institutions (Smith, 2002; Flick, 2006). As a feminist methodology (DeVault, 1999), institutional ethnography adopts a critical analysis of how discourses are regulated and performed within institutions with “a view of social organization that illuminates practices that marginalize” (Wright, 2003:243). Institutional positions are examined to deconstruct how members become unequally positioned as power is “employed and exercised” (Foucault, 1967:234). In that context, it sits well with the anti-colonial discursive framework employed as theoretical framework for this research.

From a social organization framework, institutional ethnographers consider that institutions control people’s lives through ruling relations (Campbell & Gregor, 2002; Wright, 2003). Policy texts and language (words, acts and stances) are analysed as key to the ethnographic discovery of how institutions are coordinated (Sissell, 2001). The design focuses on examining the textual basis of institutional relations and making visible how hierarchies transported through policy texts constrain knowledge, experience and discourse within the institution (Smith, 1987). It draws from ethnomethodology to discuss how experience is socially organized and power is critically important as an analytic focus (Wright, 2003:243). It focuses on understanding how the institution is organised to allow a “monolithic view to become the ‘given’ reality for all” (Rocco & West, 1998:171-172). The main questions for an institutional ethnographer include “how does this [institutional relation] happen as it does? How are these relations organized?” (Campbell & Gregor, 2002:7).

As such, institutional ethnographers use case studies that are particular, descriptive, inductive and ultimately heuristic - involving interviews that offer insight into participants' memories and explanations of why things have come to be what they are (Stark & Torrance, 2005). They examine documents for immediate content and the values that such content manifests throughout the system - from central policy maker, to local authority interpretation of policy, to local interpretation and mediation, asking questions at each level of the system where the policy has come from as well as what it is intended to achieve. Stark and Torrance suggest that this policy analysis makes it possible to derive data from well beyond the physical location of the institution of the case, and the case becomes not just one example of a policy *in situ*, in action, but the policy itself. Similarly, the institutional observations are focused on gaining "insights into the sedimented, enduring verities of ...relationships" (Stark & Torrance, 2005:35) where depth, rather than coverage, is the recommended choice.

Institutional ethnographers approach research as *discovery* of "local actualities" (Smith, 2005). For example, in this research, I was interested in exploring institutional relations and the subjective identities from the "perspectives of people located distinctively in the institutional processes" (Smith, 2005:34). The starting point is mainly focused on understanding many critical questions: How do people in this institution relate to each other? What is their shared history? What is it like to be a member of this institution? How does membership of the institution shape individual identity? (See Benzie et al., 2005). This requires a wide range of data to enable a holistic analysis of institutional structures, rituals, repertoires and relationships. Benzie et al. (2005) suggest that, in such situations, a combination of immersion and observation 'from within' on the one hand and in-depth interviewing with a focus on eliciting details of interactions, shared stories and memories on the other is probably the best scenario.

And so, like other forms of ethnography (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Atkinson et al., 2007), the process of data collection requires the researcher to spend considerable length of time (and in my case eight months); and to collect data from varying sources and using multi-methods: interacting with people in the research setting; observing and

recording activities as they unfold. These methods are to ensure that the research data are local actualities – institutional relations that emerge as field encounters. This requires a more qualitative approach focused on stories from the field (Darlington & Scott, 2002). In this research, for example, the documents and experiences brought under ethnographic scrutiny are field encounters - they emerged as I began exploring how school practices were embedded in rules within the institution, how knowledge is socially organized and the wider social implications of the relational complexities (Smith, 2002).

In terms of data analysis, institutional ethnography relies on writing descriptions, explications, and analysis of data happen in the actualities of people's experience (Smith, 2005). The analysis begins in experience and returns to it, having explicated how the experience came to happen as it does (Wright, 2003; Smith, 2005). The analytical procedure is largely inductive: understanding, organising and presenting experiences. This does not mean simplistic inductivism or naïve naturalism (Silverman, 2002) where all that is required was to observe, listen and write experiences. In this research, I engaged in in-depth examination of texts and students' talk, sifting through the complexity of views and developing insights into the symbolic meanings that constitute student experiences. My task was to construct meaning from their accounts in the context of regimes of patterned textual and social 'realities' (Campbell & Gregor, 2002).

Finally, institutional ethnography requires explication of the researcher's interactional and authorial powers and the micro-political power relations that may impact the data although it is inconceivable to think that such influences can be totally eliminated. This is important because institutional ethnography characteristically requires a justification that the authority of the experiencer informs the ethnographer's ignorance (Smith, 1987, 2005) and not an imposed version of truth. So, in this research, I needed to explain how I negotiated different identities - my personal values, insider experiences as a product of the Ghanaian school system and professional teacher as well as my authorial visibility as in 4.7.

4.3 Research Approach

This section describes the qualitative research approach although Wolcott (1990:26) and Silverman (2010:326) argued that “there is no longer a call for each researcher to ... describe and defend qualitative approaches”. The approach is more qualitative because institutional ethnography focuses on case studies using multiple methods (Flick, 2006; Atkinson, 2007; Cohen, et al., 2011) and the exploration of the visible, hidden and marginal aspects of schooling institutional life (Smith, 2005).

So, I approached this research as a social process, in which theoretical and methodological and substantive issues are inextricably linked and related to researcher identity and choices (Dunne et al., 2005b). I conceptualised the school as a field “a complex of relations” (Smith, 2005). I took an ontological stance that student experiences are organised through policy and social practices including talk, representations and performances. I collected the data through sustained interaction: becoming immersed in the everyday life of the field, interviewing, observing everyday activities and seeking student perspectives and meanings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Atkinson et al., 2007). I collected data at both meaning (talk and interpretation of observation) and factual (from policy documents and formal procedures) levels. I spent substantial time (eight months) to observe discourses (schooling practices) and to personally conduct in-depth examination of the field (the school) and the contextual practices (Bryman, 2004; Stake, 2005; Cohen et al., 2011). I observed regulation of students and knowledge production practices in the school. I sought students’ perspectives on their schooling identities using in-depth interviews and informal conversations which also involved teachers.

The data was subjected to analytical induction as the design involved observing, speaking to people and contextualising their experiences within policy texts. As I became the measuring instrument in the analysis, I went back and forth – reading, re-reading and (re)constructing the data - to make sense of the narratives. I relied on complex reasoning as I tried to link all the loose strands of the of data to arrive at themes. From my critical anti-colonial discursive framework, I organised the data with

the help of broad categories – institutional control, knowledge practices and student identities. As such, I followed the reflexive practitioner qualitative approach (Dunne et al., 2005b) where self-disclosure became important throughout the research process. I constantly reflected on my interactions and the dialogues with participants. I also approached the research with the view that my actions and inactions in the field might be defining reality for myself and the participants. In so doing, I adapted the Extended Case Method (ECM) approach to reflexivity as described by Burawoy (1998). The ECM approach to reflexivity understands research as intervention, process, structuration and reconstruction (Burawoy, 1998:14). These conception made me to understand that my researcher activities were interrupting life in the school (intervention); my research was not a one-off activity (process); my research was happening within a formal institution and the students were living ‘bodies’ who understand my questions in their own way and make meaning out of it (structuration); my analysis is a reconstruction of the students perspectives based on my previous and experiences with schooling in Ghana (reconstruction). I discuss these reflexive practices fully in in 4.7.

4.4.1 Why Case Study

What is case study and its strengths have been a matter of long standing dispute (Bassey, 1999b) because there is a host of research and evaluation reports whose procedures, methods and styles have come to be collected under the general rubric of ‘case study’ (Bassey, 1999b; Cohen et al., 2011). Case study in this research follows the understanding of Cohen and Manion (1989):

...the case study researcher typically observes the characteristics of an individual unit – a child, a clique, a class, a school or community ... to probe deeply and to analyse intensively ... with a view to establishing generalisations about the wider population to which that unit belongs. (Cohen & Manion, 1989:124-125)

Following the understanding of Cohen and Manion (1989) and with regard to the time and financial limitations, I adopted case study as instrumental – to provide opportunities for in-depth analysis of student experiences through a long dialogic process. From Simon’s (1980) idea of *a Science of the Singular*, Fielding and Moss (2011:16) emphasized the value of “critical case studies” involving students as

contributory to the expansion of public discourse of education. I selected one school which I studied in its complexity to generate knowledge that can inform wider studies. So, the knowledge generated in this research is contextual and limited to what I found through my interactions with people in the particular school. Despite this, it may be too simplistic to argue that the data is entirely limited to the prevailing conditions of the study school. The documents I analysed were generic national level documents. And, I would argue that the main points developed in the analysis may be found in broader studies of students' experiences in rural schools elsewhere in Ghana and beyond, only maybe in different forms.

4.4.2 The case study school

This section describes the selection of study school, and its characteristics. The objective criterion was rurality a hard to reach rural primary school. There are several reasons for this.

Globally, Dunne et al. (2007) noted that, education decentralisation has served urban communities better because they have been able to muster financial capital to improve quality and thus widening the quality-gap between them and rural public schools. Reviews of schooling in Ghana showed that rural schools have weak indicators of quality such as the least number of qualified teachers, the highest pupil-teacher-ratios and high incidence of educational underachievement and high school dropout rate in rural communities (Akyeampong & Stephens, 2002; Dei, 2004; Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007; MOE, 2012). The access literature in Ghana also suggested that more rural children drop out of school than in urban areas (Kraft et al., 1995; GSS, 2003; Hashim, 2005; Akyeampong et al., 2007). Research in Ghana consistently conclude that farming and fishing communities which are "hard to reach" have more problems related to schooling (Fentiman et al., 1999; CARE International, 2003; Akyeampong et al, 2007). Therefore, I selected a rural school in a hard to reach community with fishing and farming characteristics.

In terms of the community, the study school is located in a rural coastal settlement. The main economic activities of the people were fishing and farming. The community has the three main religions (Traditional, Christian and Islamic religions). There is a Mosque and three church buildings in the community. Also, there are religious sects such as the Jehovah's Witnesses as indicated in some students' comments in the analysis chapters. The main Ghanaian language used in the community is Fante, which is mostly spoken in the Central Region of Ghana. The community mainly practice the matrilineal system of inheritance which is associated with the Akan groups in Ghana. Although the community is approximately three kilometres from a municipal settlement it has very poor roads that make access to the school very difficult.

The school was difficult to reach by any means of travel (from the experience of my own visits). It also has some particular contradictions with the general characteristics ascribed to all schools. For example, although gender analysis is not the specific focus of my work, I also took interest in the school because it defies the characteristics of lower enrolment of girls than boys.

Table 4.1: Enrolment by gender

Class	Boys	Girls	Class Totals
KG1	22	28	50
KG2	12	16	28
P1	11	14	25
P2	11	15	26
P3	16	14	30
P4	14	16	30
P5	15	17	32
P6	16	16	32
TOTAL	117	136	253
% by Gender	46	54	100

Source: Field data from class register, November 2011

Table 4.1 above shows that there are more girls in each class than boys except for Primary Three (P3). Out of the total student population of 253, there were 136 (54%)

females and 117 (46%) males. Apart from KG1, the student numbers are not too high even though Akyeampong et al. (2007:48) argued that the introduction of the capitation grant has created conditions such as crowded classrooms and increased teacher workload as a result of rapid enrolment growth.

Table 4.2: Gender Parity Index (GPI) by Class enrolments

Classes	Girls	Boys	Gender Parity Index
KG 1	22	28	0.7
KG 2	16	12	1.3
P1	14	11	1.3
P2	15	11	1.4
P3	14	16	0.9
P4	16	14	1.1
P5	17	15	1.1
P6	16	16	1
Totals	136	117	1.2
%	54	46	100

Source: Field data from class register, November 2011

Table 4.2 shows that the overall GPI in the school is 1.2 which is far more in favour of girls than the national GPI of 0.95 (MOE, 2012). The data shows that KG2 and P1 have GPI of 1.3 and P2 has as high as 1.4 in favour of girls.

Table 4.3: Kindergarten (KG) Gender parity by age

Ages	KG1			KG2		
	Boys	Girls	GPI	Boys	Girls	GPI
Below 4	8	9	1.1	0	0	0
4	7	10	1.4	3	0	0
5	5	6	1.2	4	11	2.8
6+	2	3	1.5	5	5	1
Totals	22	28	1.2	12	16	1.3

Source: Field data from class register, November 2011

Table 4.3 shows higher GPI for girls in both KG 1 and in KG 2. This means that there are more girls enrolled in the both classes than there are boys. The table also shows both under-age and over-age enrolment in KG 1 and KG2. The official age for enrolment in KG1 is four (4) years. However, 17 students (8 boys and 9 girls) are under-age (below four years). It also means that there are more under-age girls than boys enrolled in KG1. Over-age students (above four years) were 16 (7 boys and 9 girls). This also means that there more over-age girls enrolled than over-age boys in KG1. Although the official age for KG2 is five (5) years, three (3) boys are under-age. Ten (10) students comprising 5 boys and 5 girls are over-age. This means that there is a high proportion of over-age enrolment in both classes.

Table 4.4: Primary enrolment by age in the school

Ages	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	TOTAL
6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	7	0	0	0	0	0	7
8	5	5	0	0	0	0	10
9	4	7	9	0	0	0	20
10	7	8	9	0	0	0	24
11	2	3	6	6	0	0	17
12	0	3	1	5	0	1	10
13+	0	0	5	19	32	31	87
Class total	25	26	30	30	32	32	175

Source: Field data from class register, November 2011

Table 4.4 shows overage enrolment at all grade levels. The official age to enrol in P1 (Primary One) is six (6) years. However, the table shows that all students in P1 are aged between seven (7) and eleven (11) years. Similarly, all the students in P2 are aged between eight (8) and 12 years while the official age to enrol at this grade level is seven (7) years. This situation is more serious for Primary Five (P5). All students aged 13 years and above although the official age to enrol at this grade level is 11 years. As the Table shows, one (1) student in P6 was aged 12 years which is the official age to enrol at that grade level.

Table 4.5: Sample daily absentees

Class	Total Enrolled	Absences	% of Absences over Total
KG1	50	11	22
KG2	28	8	28
P1	26	6	24
P2	30	8	30.7
P3	30	6	20
P4	30	10	33.3
P5	32	8	25
P6	32	9	28
Total	253	66	26

Source: Field data from class register, November 2, 2011

Table 4.5 shows about 26% (66) out of the 253 students were absent from school that day. The figure is higher for KG2 and P6 (28%), P2 (31%) to as high as P4 (33%). Considering the literature that dropping out in Ghana occurs mainly in P4, the daily absenteeism which was as high as 33% of the total class enrolment is worrying.

Table 4.6: Teacher characteristics by gender

Characteristics	Frequency	% of total population
Male	4	31
Female	8	69
Total	12	100

Source: Field data From School Log Book, November 2011

Table 4.6 shows the school has more females (8) representing 69% of the total population of teachers than males (4) teachers representing 31%. Four female teachers (two each), teach in the KG1 and KG2. The remainder of six teachers are distributed over Primary Classes One to Six, as class teachers. Each class teacher has responsibility for the class, marking the register and teaching all subjects on the timetable except *Fante*, because there is a specialist who teaches that subject across all classes. The headteacher is female and does not teach any class or subject. What it

means is that the school has the full complement of teachers contrary to national reports in Ghana suggesting that rural areas do not usually have the required number of teachers (MOE, 2011, 2012, 2013).

Table 4.7: Teacher characteristics by professional training

Characteristics	Frequency		% of total population
	Male	Female	
Untrained	1	3	31
Trained	3	5	69
TOTAL	4	8	100

Source: Field data From School Log Book, November 2011

Table 4.7 shows that unlike many rural schools, the majority of teachers in the study school were trained professionals. Eight (8) teachers representing 69% of teachers were trained professional teachers whereas four (4) representing 31% were untrained (non-professional teachers). Five (5) out of the eight (8) trained teachers are females while three (3) are males. This means that there are more female teachers than male teachers in the school. It also means that there are more trained female teachers than trained male teachers in the school.

The teacher classification within the school was important for this research because there is literature (Kirk, 2006) to suggest that the presence of female teachers makes schools safer, particularly for girls. Also, I was interested in understanding whether the professional qualification of teachers has some influence on the practices on teacher agency.

4.4.3 Research participants

The research participants comprised a critical case sample (Bradley, 1992) of fifteen (15) students purposively selected from Primary Classes 4, 5 and 6 (aged between 9 and 12 years). The critical case sample was composed of 15 students who spent their entire school life in the study school and who have been in the school for a minimum of four years. The sample was selected after longitudinal analysis of school Class

Register of the various classes to identify the group of fifteen (15) students who started Primary Class 1 in the school and are now in Classes 4, 5 and 6 in the school. This is because institutional ethnography requires that data is collected from people who have unique experiences and understandings of the actualities in the particular locale (Smith, 2005). Students from Primary 4, 5 and 6 were selected because previous research findings conclude that students in those grade levels most frequently describe school as either “uninteresting or useless” (Pryor & Gharney, 2003; Akyeampong et al, 2007:43). Also, Education Sector reports (MOE, 2010, 2011) consistently identify that dropout rates are more pronounced in primary Grades 4, 5 and 6.

Five students were selected from each of the three Classes. Overall, seven (7) males and eight (8) females constituted the critical case sample. I later found out during interviews that the students in the sample also have different religious backgrounds that enhanced diversity. Three ‘other’ students were interviewed following episodic encounters (see the subsection on interviews in this chapter). However, the research inadvertently involved the entire school population because my observations implicitly included the larger population of students and teachers who were sometimes engaged in informal conversations.

4.4 Data Collection and Methods

Institutional ethnographic case studies demand the use of multiple methods (Flick, 2006). Data is collected through fieldwork involving interactionists’ methods (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Following institutional ethnographic traditions, this research, I used in-depth interviews, observation and document analysis as methods of data collection.

4.4.1 Interviews

The type of interview used to collect data was in-depth: unstructured and problem centred (Flick, 2006), allowing the collection of data at both factual and meaning levels. I spent time to conduct in-depth one-on-one and group interviews with the 15 critical case students. The group interview sessions discussed students’ likes and dislikes about school, their perspectives on pre-classroom activities, morning chores and

school gatherings: morning assembly and school worship. Sub-themes included early morning or pre-classroom experiences, classroom experiences, school discipline, and why students continue schooling despite regulation. Also, I explored the students' perspectives on institutional power dynamics and personal/group identities; likes and dislikes about the school curriculum; and children's accounts of curriculum 'as intended', 'as experienced' and 'as internalised' versus what children want (the curriculum of the future).

Each interview began with an icebreaker or a discussion of an episodic event or storytelling session to create an informal environment for the discussions. The interview questions were open-ended so as not to suggest certain kinds of answer to respondents and to allow unusual responses to be derived so that both exmanent and immanent themes were explored (Bauer, 1996; Bryman, 2004). For each session I selected and problematized a theme such as classroom experiences, school discipline, school worship etc.

Group interviews were useful as settings for observing adult-child, student-student (e.g. junior-senior) relations which were pivotal in shaping how students interacted with me. Some students were friendlier and more open. Some were shy in front of their friends, afraid that they would be teased for talking too much to me, while others were overconfident and attention-seeking in front of their friends. The central issue for me in all enactments or voice was the embodiment, the manifestations of power relations inherent in human agency.

The one-on-one interview sessions, at least two for each member of the Critical case sample, explored individual perspectives of school on the themes discussed in the earlier paragraphs. The individual interviews allowed for two way engagements that helped to overcome group shyness and peer-regulation. The main focus of individual interviews was to explore further the themes that were discussed during group interviews in a more 'private' and confidential, setting. These were did not "Manipulation or forced recollection" of data because, from my critical anti-colonial

discursive framework (CADF), that “would constitute a violation” of student autonomy (Daniluk & Haverkamp, 1993:18). The one-on-one interviews allowed individuals to ‘confide’ in me and say things they might not have said in the ‘public’ group discussions. Also, three (3) episodic one-one-interviews (one each with a physically challenged student, a Primary 2 student who used silence as voice to refuse the teachers command to get me a seat and an over-aged Primary 3 girl who teachers use to monitor KG students to the neglect of her own studies).

Seven (7) unplanned whole-class discussions, at least one with each class, were held with students on different days and times when class teachers were absent. Those discussions focused on the students’ perspectives on schooling and what they do when the teacher did not report to school. In those moments, we talked informally. I usually sat with them – not on the class teacher’s tables. This was to avoid being seen as a teacher. When I sat among them we talked about any topic - any topic about school. Our periods of unstructured talk were a time of friendship. It offered possibilities to engage with a broader group of students in very informal ways. They asked me questions and I asked questions. From these moments, I learnt lots that helped me to crosscheck some of the data I was gathering from the critical case sample. The free talks in those moments were very helpful to the students. As we talked teachers would come around to try to cane the students for making ‘noise’. Once the teacher recognised my presence it was understood that they were talking to me. The students were spared the caning. I saw on their faces the sighs of relief. They told me - *Sir thank you.* When that happens, it reminds me of “ways in which violence disempowers children, restricting their freedoms” (Parkes, 2008:294). It also indicates the power relations going on between me and the teachers. It was why the some students will ask me to tell the teachers to stop caning them. As always, I tell them it was not my duty. Anytime I say my ‘it is not my duty’ it evokes all kinds of feeling in me. Parkes (2008) explained these feelings from her research with children in South Africa. As Parkes explained, I have often had the “desire to protect or to rescue” (p.294) but there was little I could do as a researcher. What I could do was to represent the students’

experiences as I experienced it in order to make their conditioning in school a public matter through the publication of this research.

Also, I spent time with teachers, engaging them in informal conversations about school, the education system and the students. Such discussions were usually episodic, arising from the teachers' attempt to find out my opinions about their practices or about my days as a primary school teacher. I used those moments to engage with teachers on issues around teacher identity and their pedagogic practices. I had discussions with the headteacher about the school system and corporal punishment (caning).

4.4.2 Observation

Sen (1993:126) is concerned that "what we can observe depends on our position vis-à-vis the objects of observation". Dunne et al. (2005b) suggested that such researcher positioning during observation is not fixed, it inevitably alters over time. In this research I adopted the *peripheral membership* role during my observations, which implied that I was not participating in the core membership activities of teaching and learning. My observation style was one in which the researcher does not directly disrupt or intervene in social processes (Denscombe, 2007) although I knew that my "presence may facilitate meaningful change in the self-awareness of the people" (Portelli, 1991:44). I used observation guides (Appendix 6) to observe everyday interactions outside and inside the classroom, taking note of different practices: classroom activities, modes of school discipline and inter-relations among the main school actors (students and teachers). I observed school practices at different times of the day: during early morning sessions, during lessons and during special periods such as break time, library and physical education periods, until saturation was reached.

As mentioned earlier, I did not adopt active-membership or complete-membership roles in my observations during my interactions in the school. I was not always in the classrooms. I observed classroom practices during different subject periods taking note of teaching practices, teacher-student and student-student interactions within the classroom. I observed students' pre-classroom activities, morning chores and their

regulation at school gatherings: morning assembly and school worship. The observation data was recorded in my field notes. At the close of each day of observation, I wrote my reflections in my research diary and plan for the next observation. Sometimes, my reflections on notes in my research diary helped me to locate gaps in the data. I usually filled those gaps during interviews. Other times those reflections led me to further interrogation of school policy texts to understand why things were happening in particular ways. So, my research diary became useful for (re)thinking through the data and re-searching gaps I might have to fill in order to develop a 'full' understanding of what was happening within the research context.

During observations (and sometimes during interviews), I drew on the understanding from Eder and Fingerson (2002) that interacting with groups of children in the 'naturalness' helped to observe peer relations and diffuses the researcher-participant power relations in dealing with a child on his/her own. In the case of my research, I joined students in natural conversation environments. I found that an effective way of being part of students in a 'natural' way was to try to 'blend in' with them or playing with them. I joined their band on the way home after school and joined in their 'childish' conversations, but only to listen and talk rarely, to hear what they really think. They asked me questions before I was admitted into their world. Then they told me their initial doubts and reservations about my sincerity. From that time they told me their stories, the words from their hearts (Mander, 2002) in which I felt their pains, their frustrations and their anger with school practices, and how they feel regulated within.

4.4.3 Documentary data

The relevant issue that warrants the collection of data from those policy texts is institutional ethnographers' view that texts (documents) disclose how power is embedded within institutional structures, functions to organise and dictate the socio-cultural space (Wright, 2003; 2005). Also, institutional ethnographers argue that dominant institutional culture is mediated by documents constituted externally (Smith, 1987:3; Wright, 2003). The understanding is that, documents (written text) define ruling relations and the emergent discourse transports power in ideologies to extended social relations within social institutions (Devault & McCoy, 2001). Therefore, I analysed

school policy documents with the belief that those documents set the parameters for a person's ability or inability to navigate the structural and political sub-systems that impact learning and participation in educational programs (Wright, 2003).

The main documents studied for this research were the *Headteachers Handbook* and the *Unified Code of Discipline for Basic Education Schools* but the entries in the school *Class Registers* were also studied. The *Headteachers' Handbook* and the *Unified Code of Discipline for Basic Education Schools* were the main policy texts in the school. They did not exist as separate documents because the Unified Code of Discipline for Basic Education Schools was not dated and it exists as an appendix to the Headteachers' Handbook (2006).

The Headteacher's Handbook and the Unified Code of Discipline for Basic Education Schools were selected for study because they are national level policy texts that spelt out how school should be organised and administered. As the name implies the Headteachers' Handbook codifies all rules and regulations on school management and administration. It is the main reference book for Headteachers as it provides guidance on the dos and don'ts. The Code of Discipline defined misconducts that are punishable and prescribes specific punishments for the various forms of misconducts such as lateness and littering among others.

What I observed is that the privileged culture in those documents interpenetrates the multiple sites of power and implicates the degree of power different persons can appropriate, merging the micro-social context of the learner with the macro social and cultural dimensions that influence learning and teaching. My analyses of both documents revealed interesting provisions on school hierarchy, discipline and schools' practices which I discussed more in Chapter Five. What I noticed from my reading of school policy texts is that, the dominant culture inhabited in those documents does not just imply power, but "oppression, discrimination, and exclusion" (Guy, 1999:11) of the unique experiences of those who differ in religion, class, and gender (Wright, 2003). These documents appropriate power and inadvertently define the hierarchical relations

discussed in Chapter Five of this thesis. They contain directives on school management and roles and responsibilities of the head teacher, teachers and expectations of students. My proposition is that these documents provided the basis by which groups of students are silenced, misrepresented, or absent in the production and dissemination of authoritative knowledge as I discussed in the analysis chapters.

4.5 Data analysis

My type of analysis does not follow the dominant structure which commonly presents a detached, controlled, authorially imposed version of findings (Schostak, 2002; Dunne et al., 2005b). From my institutional ethnographic approach, making meaning of accounts and experiences requires critical discourse analysis (Cohen et al., 2011). Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is well-fitting tool for understanding institutional relations and amenable to critically examine policies, practices and personal discourses within the institution (Fairclough, 2006). As Fairclough suggested, CDA involves systematically linking properties of interactions and texts with features of their social and cultural circumstances. It offers a "mode" or "perspective" of theorizing, analysis, and application throughout the whole field (van Dijk, 2001). Operationally, that involved asking and addressing the basic questions: how does one speak the truth? What truth? For whom and where? (Said, 1991:29). This was important for my research which is apparently political: addressing student experiences of power and identities in schooling.

As Schostak (2002) explained, I needed to present pieces of *narrative* (context-bound personal form of theorization), *multivocality* (textualizing the plural perspectives and voices – of different participants – on the same culture), *authorial collaboration* (including participants' voices in the representation of the findings), and *open-endedness* by dramatizing the tensions in data collection and interpretation to encourage the readers to form alternate paradigms of understanding. I needed to knit the fragmentary experiences into some kind of multi-dimensional whole (themes into which all accounts will tumble). Embodied in such analysis is acknowledgement of my researcher responsibilities (van Dijk, 2001) including "half-involvements and half-

detachments" as an outsider and insider researcher (Said, 1993:60, 49), authorial visibility, my status as the measuring instrument and the nestedness with broader socio-cultural contexts. The explication of student experiences within school regimes and their identities was a task of interpretation involving continual reflection about the data (Baumann, 1997; Dunne et al., 2005b). From the data collection stage, I was asking analytic questions to remain faithful to the original meaning participants constructed about their experiences. I was conscious that the analysis should highlight students' voices owing to my attachments with anti-colonial theory. As such, I did not reductively impose a stereotype on the narratives of student experiences of schooling. Rather, I sought meaning out of all its complexity, instability, and diversity to generate organising themes into which all accounts tumbled.

The analysis involves representing the 'unsaid' and 'unsayable' (Usher, 1996). Those mainly include the observation data comprising the contextual acts and the stances. Thus the analysis is socio-politically situated, deconstructing institutionalised power dynamics connected to global relations. I approached the analysis with the view that each interview, observation or document data set in train a course of action that is a life curriculum cut-out from a jumble of wider social relations that impact schooling experiences and vice versa (Schostak, 2002). Practically, I approached the data analysis and findings through inductive and recursive processes: dealing with patterns, categories, or themes that evolved during the data collection. I began the analysis by repeatedly reviewing my field notes and research diary to reflect on the data. From the repeated readings, I discerned patterns: organising themes (micro and macro) from the mosaic of student accounts.

The data collected using the different methods were not analysed separately but triangulated. By triangulation, I mean a systematic process of looking across multiple data sources to crosscheck and confirm evidence to derive themed findings (Cohen et al., 2011). My understanding was that interviews, for example, can be analysed for key imagery, expressed values or rationales that can be complemented with data from observations and documents. Some accounts were examined during observations

while some observation data were also crosschecked during interviews. The process allowed for the construction of organised accounts instead of patchworks of narratives. I analysed students' experiences in nuanced forms to identify regulatory regimes emerging from the official pedagogic intentions and the localised actual experiences of students.

This process of data analysis, nicely written here involved many puzzles, frustrations and confounding understandings (which I discussed more in Section 4.6 of this Chapter). I went back and forth, reading texts and negotiating meanings. I have moved from theory to students' perspectives and moved back to theory from their perspectives. As Smith (2006:231) advised, this process of data analysis involved theorising knowledge about the students' experiences; reflecting on it; engaging with it; making assumptions based upon it; and often critically engaging in the way that it has been and is being constructed by them and myself. Then there was my embroilment in the hegemonic power/knowledge discourse of Western 'academic' writing (in English) about a 'developing' country. It was my task to endeavour to both maintain authorial visibility and to highlight the students' voices in the analysis. The works of Parkes (2009, 2010) were helpful in centering the students' perspectives during data collection; making sense of it during the data analysis; and theorizing about it in the construction of the text of this thesis.

Despite the long-time concerns over whether children's accounts are factually correct (Christensen & James, 2000; Punch, 2002; Coad & Lewis, 2004) I represented their views because I witnessed much of what they experience. I could not pejoratively marginalise student's views and perspectives as inaccuracies, lies or evasions to justify the location of knowledge as a property of adulthood (Christen & James, 2000; Alderson, 2000; Punch, 2002). The methodology and methods I used enabled me to be on-site, observing and comparing what was being said with what is prescribed in the school policy. I was in classrooms to observe so that I could crosscheck what students told me about teaching and learning in the classroom. I have acquired examination question papers and have witnessed the cognitive questions. I have analysed the

school timetable and school hierarchy; and, I have spoken to teachers. From all these, I was convinced that what is important in research involving child participants is for one to engage with the fine research principles that are not uncommon in the literature (see Coad & Lewis, 2004; Allmark, 2002; Johnson, 2002; Parkes, 2008, 2009, 2010; Adzahlie-Mensah, 2013). Coad and Lewis (2004) have documented various ways of researching with children and using them as research participants that can produce useful results, than ascribing lies and incompetence as properties of childhood. I stand by the analysis in this study and do respect the courage of the students (whose names I cannot acknowledge for obvious ethical reasons) who shared their experiences with me.

4.6 Ethics and ethical dilemmas

In the course of this research, I noticed that ethics “is not simply a problem, which has to be solved technically” (Flick, 2006:230). Research involving human subjects is often obstructive and so, governed by sets of principles and guidelines for procedures (Creswell, 2009; Adzahlie-Mensah, 2013). Ethical decisions were made at every stage of this research’s process in order that the students do not become objects of my researcher gaze (Parkes, 2009). Sometimes I faced dilemmas that were complex and difficult to negotiate. Micro-political issues - researcher-researched relationships, authorial visibility and insider-outsider characteristics - became implicated in the research process, and made it important to illuminate how I negotiated the complexities including my multiple selves. Whereas Burgess (1989:8) suggests there is no “solution” to ethical dilemmas, I share the view that ethical adequacy is integral to questions of validity and reflexivity in qualitative research (Dunne et al., 2005b; Cohen et al., 2011; Adzahlie-Mensah, 2013).

In this thesis, ethics became more pronounced for several reasons. The first is the social constructions of children as a vulnerable group and their institutionalisation in school (Coad & Lewis, 2004). The institutionalisation of children in school and the responsibilities of educational administrators meant that I had to negotiate access with gatekeepers. The University of Sussex ethical clearance requirements construct research involving children as a High Risk Project, and I needed to obtain ethical

approval (Appendix 1) prior to fieldwork. I had to clarify, especially, how I would observe the 1964 Helsinki research standards (as amended in 1989 and 1996) and the Ghana Children's Act 1998, Act 560. These standards require protecting the best interest of children, informed consent and data protection.

As such, I sought the written consent of the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service to gain access into schools (Appendix 2). Data collection started only after written permission was granted.

The headteacher and class teachers were the next gatekeepers to give permission. The purpose of the study and the process of data collection were discussed with the headteacher. She gave verbal approval,

Mr Mensah, you are welcome to do your research here. I don't have a problem. We are all interested in what will improve education in this country as the director's letter is saying (referring to copy of the clearance letter from the district office). And from your letter (referring to Consent Form) I can see you are interested in the good of this country. Let me call my teachers to inform them and you can explain to them further...

She then called the teachers to hear about the research. They gave verbal approval:

I can tell you that researchers come here all the time. We have no opposition to research as you see from the comments of my colleagues because it helps everyone. Please, let us know if there is any way we can support you. I think you just have to inform the head if you think there is anything we can do to help you (Teacher 1)

The process of obtaining ethical clearance from students was not simply that prospective participants were given the opportunity to read an information sheet and consent form stating the research purpose or their rights and my responsibilities. Even when following a researcher-led agenda during interviews, students were active agents in choosing what they were willing and not willing to disclose. I continuously negotiate access by securing day-by-day consent/assent. I draw from empowerment aspects of Participatory Action Research (Stoecker, 1999) to negotiate access with students as an on-going process.

Each student was informed of my obligations to respect their decisions, and to protect anonymity and confidentiality. They were informed of the purpose of the research and their right to withdraw including withdrawal of data. They came into the research only after giving verbal consent. The verbal consent was to reduce students' anxiety concerning the possibility of being identified later if they signed a written consent form. Each interview session, for example, began with a reminder to students that participation in the research was voluntary. Students were reminded of the right to withdraw from the research or to withdraw during the interview process. Then I asked the students if they had any questions for me. Sometimes I asked them what they thought we should talk about. I often asked: which aspect of school do you want us to discuss today? The purpose of this was to ensure that there was active engagement in the interview process. This encouraged the students to become part of the research agenda and to help determine what is reported as their experiences.

As Mander (2010) suggested, listening to people's own stories, and learning from their lived realities, as recalled by them is not detached from the ethics of caring and accountability. For example, when students refused to meet me at particular times for interviews I needed to respect their decision. Sometimes I re-scheduled interview appointments when students were happily playing. Other times I did so to demonstrate my sensitivity to their needs. For example, when others were playing and they get disinterested in our conversation. So, the decision on the setting and timing of interviews presented important ethical dilemmas as I realised my research was interrupting and disrupting to student learning and play time. This has practical implications for issues such as number of interview sessions, where and timing (when and how long). Later, I noticed that such practice rather made students more confident and they trusted my sincerity. One student (Student 5) commented,

Sir, I like the way you have been with us. Some people just come and talk to us and go. But you are different because you always want to be sure that you are writing only what we are saying. This is why we tell you the truth when we meet.

'Sir' at the beginning of the students' comment was commonly ascribed to me. The students and teachers often addressed me as 'Sir' no matter how I tried to make them

use my first name. I realised the term 'Sir' was reserved for the male teachers. It suggested the way the students and the teachers positioned me when I am addressed by that title. It suggested to me that I have been assigned a position of power. It was my task to 'break down' the mental and relational 'barriers' erected by that positioning. To negotiate this I benefitted mainly from Burawoy's (1998) Extended Case Method (ECM) of reflexivity, in negotiating these micro-political research issues (see Section 4.7 further discussion on how I employed the ECM). The students' comment itself bespeaks Schostak's (2002) suggestion that, when we research, we are observed by participants, our practice is assessed and an opinion is formed. When we research human subjects they observe our actions, to form opinions about our practice; about our purposes; and to choose or act whimsically, making judgements, and taking decisions. For me, this implies alertness to the needs of research participants. By needs, I mean respecting and engaging with participants as 'equal' partners. This implies listening to them even at times when they want to talk about something else for a few minutes. It means being patient with them as they take time to build trust or when they need more time to respond to our questions. Alertness to their participant's needs include doing what we say – our commitments to anonymity, confidentiality, giving feedback and sharing highlights of our data. It includes building relationships (with care though) where necessary far beyond the fieldwork period. These relationships are necessary because we might need further data later. In the experience of this research, there sometimes when I went back to the school to crosscheck some data and address some gaps in the initial data. These were possible because I maintained the relationship beyond the initial fieldwork stage. However, as the students' comments indicate we need to build good relationships in order not to compromise opportunities for future researchers.

As such, my ethical practices throughout the research were largely influenced by the dispositions of students and other interlocutors. Their (in)actions presented me with many personal struggles and ethical dilemmas throughout research process. The headteacher and teachers were not to know what I discussed with the students. Yet the headteacher would often say *please, let me know if you see anything that does not*

meet expected standards so that we can correct it. I was careful not to become a school assessor or inspector. I told her that my research was not intended to find fault with the school but to collect data for analytical purposes. Whereas I am able to share the analytical findings of the research, it was important to protect confidentiality, anonymity.

The students, on the other hand, saw me talking with teachers. So a Primary 5 student asked me during group interview, *Sir, are you sure the teachers don't know what we are telling you?* Although they required me to de-identify with the adult teaching group to gain their trust, the students actually needed assurance that teachers were aware of my presence in the school before engaging with me. They also told me, *"Please tell our teachers to stop caning us."* These kinds of comments presented me with dilemmas in how I negotiated the field relationships with both teachers and students. First, I addressed their worries by explaining to them that I engaged with teachers as 'significant others'. I explained to students that I have different questions to ask teachers and the headteacher. I constantly reminded and assured students of my legal obligations to protect their best interest and only inform appropriate bodies outside the school. For example, I reminded them that research procedures and Ghana's Criminal Code require that any action I would take to protect them will be done with professional advice to not put them at risk of any harm or danger.

One difficulty I had to negotiate was how to balance privacy and my commitment that the interview sessions will NOT be held in secluded environments. The balance became more problematic because some non-participants and teachers attempted to eavesdrop. For example, at the beginning of each interview I agreed with students that I would share a story of my school days with any intruding student(s) or teacher(s) before gently asking the individual(s) to leave us to continue our conversation. In one instance a teacher came to sit among us. He insisted that he wanted to participate and hear what we are discussing. I realising he was 'jokingly serious' – he will not go away! I said to this teacher,

you know what, today I have been telling my friends about my days as a school child. They have been listening, and I guess, wondering how difficult those days

were. When we went to school in our 'khaki' uniforms. When people we went to school twice in each weekday. When all students had to attend Sunday worship.

I noticed however, that teacher was not a product of 'our' education system that preceded the 1987 education restructuring. So he quickly interjected,

you guys (students) are enjoying a lot of history lessons here. Please Sir, can we talk after your meeting with them.

Such moments were challenging. I experienced three such moments from three teachers (two males and a female). After the second incident, I felt I was teaching the students how to tell lies. I was stricter on the third occasion. I let him know that our discussions were confidential. I explained to him that it was really important for him to respect our space and privacy. But these moments were also helpful. It let the students know that I have not been not been talking to teachers about our discussions.

Yet, there were chasms of gender, age, education and language which I had to bridge in the research relationship. My status as an adult researcher made students less powerful in our interactions. As Asif (2001) suggested, it was crucial for me to act with responsibility and great sensitivity to the unequal power relations between me and the students to ensure that they do not keep information away from me. I drew on Mander's (2010) advice to remain non-judgemental, sensitive and accepting as possible. I tried to take no moral positions overtly or covertly which could exacerbate the power differentials. For example, I tried to reduce the 'choreographic power' of the distances - gender, age, education and language – in the research relationship so that students did not feel their talk were regulated as in the classroom. Also, I used simple everyday English because the students had less linguistic capital than me. When students became rowdy during interviews, I could not use the traditional regulatory mechanisms such as commanding them to sit as teachers do in class. Sometimes they were self-regulatory: some will often say, *Keep quiet! Don't you respect? Or Can't you see Sir is here?* Those student comments indicate how adult regulation is internalised by students such that my ordinary presence is invoked to control their talk. I tried to encourage 'free talk' by carefully 'diluting' the 'regulatory force' of those comments by

saying, *although I thank [name] for asking us to keep quiet, you do not have to control yourselves too much because I am here.*

Other ethical dilemmas related to personal struggles such as standing to watch, feeling 'powerless' as teachers administer corporal punishment (caning) on students. My personal values include the UNICEF's (2006) position that children are given vital life skills and information to protect themselves from abuse and exploitation. I felt I was failing to protect the best interest of the students at those moments because of my human rights values: protecting the rights of children and securing a protective environment for them.

Finally, the decision to use pseudonyms in recording the data and in the analysis interfaced with how much information I disclosed about the school, teachers and students. I was aware that people with good knowledge about schools in the study district might be able to identify the particular school through the 'breadth' and 'depth' of my descriptions. I used themed findings instead of presenting individual cases because I was conscious that potential readers in the study school might attribute voice to certain students. That did not affect the analysis because the research purpose was to investigate local knowledge to provide organised insight into how student experiences add substantially to what we know now and can know about schooling in Ghana.

4.7 Researcher identity and reflexivity

My choices as a researcher and identity as a student, basic school teacher and a researcher in Ghana determined the approaches, methods of data collection and the literature that places the project in relation to the scholarship and theorisation of others (Schostak, 2002). My work as a research fellow at the National Centre for Research into Basic Education (NCRIBE) influenced the choice to research students' experiences at the basic school level, but it was my human rights convictions about giving voice to children that mostly informed the choice of anti-colonial theory. This highlights the impossibility of researcher identity remaining 'outside of' the research. So, reflexivity in this research has both personal and epistemological dimensions.

What **personal reflexivity** meant to me is how my own values, experiences, interest, beliefs, political commitments about education in Ghana and wider aims in life shaped the research. It involved thinking about how the research process may have affected and possibly changed me, as a citizen and as a researcher. It encompasses my personal choices in keeping a research diary, writing one thing at a time and how the research was framed for my purpose. **Epistemological reflexivity** concerned how the research questions define and limit the focus of my research and what can be known; how the design of the study and the methods of analysis 'constructed' the data and the findings. Epistemological reflexivity is a reflection upon my theoretical assumptions and their implications for the research findings and how the research questions could be investigated differently. As indicated in 4.3, I draw together these personal and epistemological concerns by borrowing from Burawoy's (1998:14) approach to reflexivity which understands research as intervention, process, structuration and reconstruction.

I understood my fieldwork as an *intervention* - disrupting life in the study school. The headteacher spent part of the official time to talk to me. In general, I considered my interviews and observation practices as intrusion into the participants' life-world which is the reason I have been committed to ethical standards (as outlined in the earlier section) to assure that the research does no harm to participants. I was a disrupting stranger when I entered classes to observe. Teachers were more enthusiastic about teaching as though they were being supervised. My self-awareness that the research was interrupting school life led me to take steps to avoid what I choose to call 'data woes'. By data woes I mean collecting data through routinized observation, which may produce facts that may be far removed from the actualities in the field. This may result from different scenarios. One scenario relates to remaining in the field for too long and always observing or interviewing. I noticed after about three weeks of observation that I was becoming routinized in my thinking and reflections about the data. My gaze was fixed on particular aspects of schooling while I was taking other aspects for granted, which means a failure to recognise some school practices as carrying the effects of

power and shaping student identities. The way I avoided becoming routinized was to take 'reflective breaks' (day-off from observations). I conducted three (3) days of observation each week. Each week I took two days off (the days-off were random). I used those days to reflect on the data and to plan what to observe further. I also used those days to think through my interview processes and to identify issues I might explore in further interviews. Also, when I visited the school, I went at different times (very early before students or teachers report to school, during assembly time, at break time or just before closing time). My reason was to see how things get done particularly when the students and teachers were **not** expecting me. I would argue that such efforts to avoid 'data woes' can definitely give richer data because they reduce disruptions in the life world of the participants as well as helped to avoid the situation where the researcher becomes routinized or less reflective and uncritical.

I considered my research as a *process* mainly because I could not "standardise" (Burawoy, 1998:14) how students and school members interpreted interview questions and my actions. During interviews, for example, I drew lessons from critical language awareness, which requires awareness that language has a constructive dimension that mirrors reality for the students (Fairclough, 1995). For example, when I asked students how they feel about caning, I did so with the awareness that I was invoking their emotions. This meant that 'emotion' was oriented to whatever the participants choose to say in response to the question. As indicated earlier, I tried to use simple everyday English to mitigate the impact of my linguistic capital on our interactions. Also, I tried to be as clear as possible, avoiding ambiguities, when asking questions. I always try to rephrase any question when the participants did not seem to grasp the content of a question.

I recognized that my research was occurring within a school – a formal institution with policies and regulatory 'structures' as discussed in Chapter Five. I needed to read school policy documents to deconstruct institutional hierarchies. Ethically too, structuration dictated that I secure permission from gatekeepers before gaining access to students as discussed in 4.6. The social relations in school are critical in shaping the

data. For example, I would argue that the data for this research is limited in part by the gaps between what students can say and what they think their positioning as students allows them to say. Sometimes, I needed to identify the 'unsayable' by observing acts and stances with the awareness that it is not everything that students could communicate verbally. Part of the structuration was the adult-child relational barriers such as generational gaps between me and the students. I needed to associate with students, conversing informally with them in order to gain access into their 'world' and the background from which their experiences were constructed. Breaking those adult-child barriers (impact of age relations) meant becoming aware of the constant struggle to balance my own identities, needs and interests with the perceived needs and interests of the students. This reflected in how I empowered the students. For example, we often agreed on the time and venue for interviews in a collaborative way. From my observations and interviews I realised that one can gain access to the 'sincere' voices of the students through methods such as prolonged observation and in-depth informal interviewing. Although these methods worked well with the students, they were subject to limitations as a result of the power complexities and regulations within the school. I observed during initial interviews that students felt regulated when our sitting positions were in the form of classroom-style arrangements. It limited their participation in our discussions. However, they talked and actively participated in our discussions when the seating arrangements were in an 'orderless' form.

I considered my research and its final product (the thesis) as a *reconstruction* of the students perspectives based on my previous interactions with the subject matter (schooling) and how my professional embodiments (as a researcher) influenced the interpretation of the data, and the construction of the final text (Burawoy, 1998:16). My biographical baggage as a Ghanaian and a product of the Ghanaian basic education system as well as a Basic School teacher meant I have some previous experiences with the subject matter, which influenced the entire research. My insider knowledge partly influenced me to choose institutional ethnography. I wanted to spend a long and sustained period in the study school because I wanted to become a familiar face at a point in the data collection so that practices would not be moderated to be fit for my

presence. I wanted the students to come to take me as a familiar member of the school so they could engage in natural conversations with me such that they could tell me stories from their hearts. I also had insider perspectives into everyday teacher practices and the distances between teachers and students in school. Also, my previous research work as a basic school teacher and researcher at NCRIBE meant that I have some basic knowledge of how schools are organized and administered.

However, my previous research works were neither on the same subject nor in the same school. I was acting as an 'outsider', flatly aware that I was neither a teacher nor a student in any Ghanaian Basic school at the time of the research. I was a stranger with a gaze on a field. I could only capture what happens within the radius of my gaze. So, the data I collected is a limited product of what my gaze could capture. Also, I considered myself as an outsider because, I acquired values related to the nature and objectives of the research in Western education. I read dominant Western theories, philosophies methodological approaches to research. Such training affected my perceptions and constructions of realities throughout the research. For example, during the analysis, I was constantly aware that I collected the data in a familiar environment and from somewhat familiar people but the research product, the text of this thesis, is also for audience in a fairly unfamiliar environment. Sometimes, I would pause and question the quality of my English expressions and grammar. I often asked myself, 'How will the English supervisors and readers understand or interpret this phrase or sentence?' These were some of the complexities I navigated throughout the research process.

CHAPTER FIVE

SCHOOLING AS CONTROL

5.1 Introduction

This chapter and the following two chapters discuss school as a field of rules where children are brought (and brought up) to learn as well as make them particular sorts of persons. This chapter outlines a first stage of analysis focused on overt regulation by deconstructing how school policy texts establish institutional ruling relations, that is hierarchies and surveillance mechanisms through which schooling discourse is framed. Chapter Six continues the analysis of how control over discourse is enacted in knowledge production practices and focuses more on what Foucault (1977) may call invisible disciplining of bodies through pedagogical practices. Chapter Seven focuses, more pointedly, on student identities as the social consequences of regulation within school and how students navigate their identities in school. The ordering of the of three broad but interconnected analysis chapter themes indicates not only the flow of substantive issues - regimes of schooling and student identities, but also, the development in my thinking and theorisation.

This first analysis chapter shows the development in my thinking, analysis and theorisation by discussing the formal rules on school organisation. I examine how school social relations are framed in school policy texts; the in-built authority structures that ensure students are constantly watched and controlled (Smith, 2005). The analysis follows institutional ethnographers' intellectual traditions that conceptualise school as a place where all members are subject to some form of control (Illich, 1971; Freire, 1993; Foucault, 1995; Harber, 2004). The main argument developed is that relations among school members are organised by institutional rules that constitute the overt rational official structuring of the corporeal dimensions of belonging together.

The data analysed in this chapter are mainly drawn from the *Headteachers' Handbook* and the *Unified Code of Discipline for Basic Education Schools*, which together serve as school policy texts that outline school hierarchies, institutional surveillance

mechanisms and the code of discipline. In doing so, I draw on membership categorisation analysis (Sacks, 1972; Schegloff, 2007) to discuss how school policy established the boundaries of interaction within the school. The discussion is organised in three sections. The first section highlights that power positions (such as headteacher, duty teachers, class teachers, and school prefects) are organised through institutional hierarchies. The second discusses how institutional regulation is underlined by the school timetable - the main document defining how official school is regimented (timed and controlled). The third discusses the code of discipline and highlights the use of corporal punishment (caning) to regulate students.

5.2 School organisation

Central to the theorisation of this thesis is the idea that “the authoritarian organisational style of schooling bequeathed by ... colonialism remains a firm legacy in post-colonial societies” (Harber, 2004:62). As I explained in Chapters Two and Three, the literature suggests that schools operate with rules and hierarchies that sustain “authoritarian stress on conformity and obedience” (Alexander, 2000:92), and contemporary Ghanaian writers maintain that the practices are still prevalent (Adjei, 2007; Quartey, 2007). I therefore draw in this section on Foucault’s (1995:199) idea of “disciplinary partitioning” to explore how school policy ascribes power positions which sustained authoritarian school organisation within the research school (see school organogram depicted in Figure 5.1).

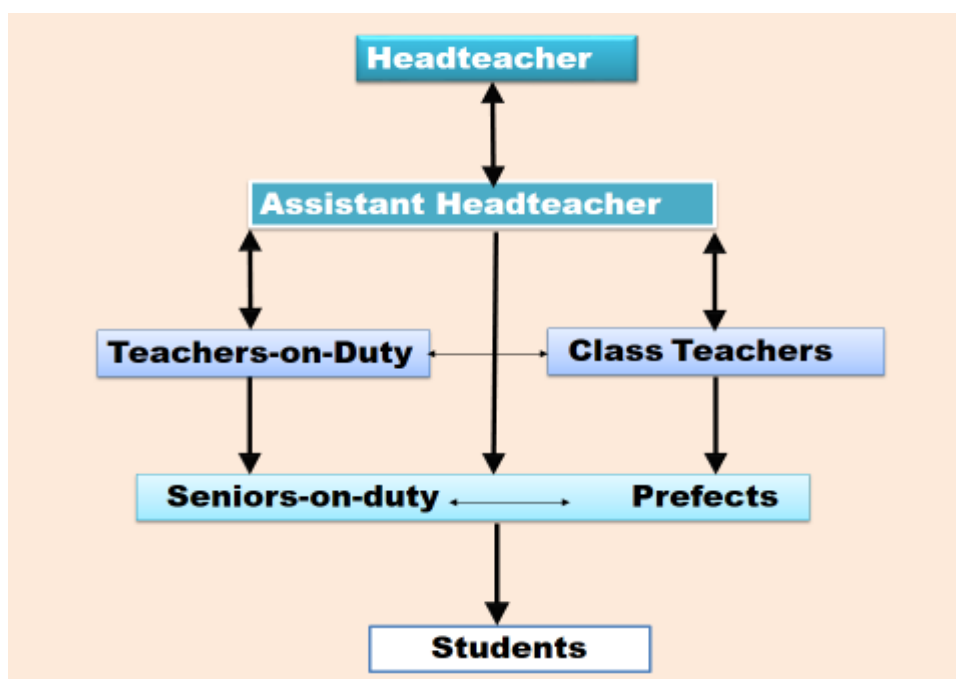


Figure 5.1: Author's conception of School hierarchy in Headteachers' Handbook

The organogram depicts that the headteacher is highest in the pecking order while students are lowest. The assistant headteacher deputises for the headteacher and exercises some authority over colleagues. Teachers-on-duty are two teachers selected by the headteacher every week on rotational basis to be specifically responsible for monitoring students. In the case study school, the headteacher also assigns each teacher (with the exception of the Fante² teacher) to specific classes as class-teachers. These class teachers were responsible for teaching all prescribed subjects listed on the school timetable in their respective classes. Female teachers were assigned to the lower classes while male teachers were assigned to teach in the upper classes. The reasoning, as the headteacher explained to me, was that *female teachers were more motherly*, and so presumably *more sympathetic to little children*. For me, the headteacher's comment reveals more about 'the order of things' within the school regarding how teachers are expected to relate with students in their respective classes (Foucault, 2008). It also suggests a homogenising of teachers' personal qualities (such

² Fante is the Ghanaian language of the community in which the school is located.

as kindness and warmth or the lack thereof) based on gender. It also implies the homogenising of students' needs based on age and teachers' capacity to respond to students' perceived emotional needs. There is also an assumption that all children in a class belong to the same age group and nullifies the clear age differences within the various classes.

Class teachers are monitors at the micro level of the classroom. Class teachers sit on tables located in front of the rows of students' desks in the classroom. From that vantage position, they observe and control students' behaviour. This highlights Foucault's assertion of the classroom as,

enclosed, segmented space, observed at every point, in which individuals are inserted in a fixed place, in which the slightest movements are supervised, in which all events are recorded, . . . in which power is exercised without division, according to a continuous hierarchical figure, in which each individual is constantly located, examined (1995:197).

Class teachers regulate the classroom by checking student attendance using the class register (see sample in Appendix 4). The Class Register is an official document in which students' names are alphabetically listed with the names of girls separate from those of boys. Typically, the class teacher would call-out students' names as listed in the register. Those present are marked 'present' (1) and those who do not respond are marked 'absent' (0). Students who reported after their names were called were considered latecomers. Teachers also regulate students during knowledge production, as would be discussed in Chapter Six.

The arrows pointing both ways denote the presence of significant agency and resistance in the interactions taking place among teachers (headteacher, assistant headteacher, teachers-on-duty and class teachers), which is not the same as student-teacher relations. Students explained this in a group interview:

You cannot report the teachers to anyone. Sir, will you report them to your parents or to the headteacher. Sir, look at them! ... They are always sitting there and the headteacher also sits with them. You cannot do anything (Group Interview, November 22, 2011).

Whereas that argument does not mean that teachers have the same power as the headteacher, it illustrates students' perspectives on the collective power imbalance between them and the school management staff (headteacher and teachers).

The *Headteachers' Handbook*, the main policy text in the school, addresses the headteacher as the positional figure that must *make sure that there is discipline among teachers and pupils* (Headteachers' Handbook, 2006:11). It continues that the term, *discipline, calls for control*. It tasks the headteacher to *check on late coming and absenteeism of both teachers and pupils*. The headteacher has the task to monitor teaching and learning by *going around during teaching sessions to ... make sure that all subjects on the timetable are taught* (p.12). In decision-making, *it is expected that the experience, tact and firmness of the head of school will be brought to bear on all decisions* (p.257). The following interview comments below from students highlight how the headteacher exercised this decision-making authority in relation to the distribution of school uniforms and textbooks that were provided by central government.

We were here when the District Officers came to give us plenty uniforms. They told us our parents don't have to buy uniforms for us anymore. But we don't see the uniforms! ... You cannot even ask ... They [uniforms] came last year and this year also. The uniforms were plenty. But, Sir, we don't know where the uniforms have been kept. The only thing is that we too don't ask for it because we fear the teachers. ...I think they should have given some to those whose uniforms are torn. I think they are packed in the Headteacher's Office or in a store somewhere for sale. Who can you ask? (Student 12, Female)

I have been in this school and we were told that Government has sent textbooks for all of us [students]. They will give us the books to take home. Now the books are in the Office [Headteachers' Office]. The teachers don't give us the books to read or study because they say we are children. Hmm, and you see you cannot ask the teachers. You cannot ask the headteacher because the district people come here and talk to the teachers and go. How can you give something and you will not find out if they are being distributed or not. (Student 1, Male)

(Group Interview with students on Monday November 7, 2011)

Implicit in these student comments is the unchallengeable authority of the headteacher. The comments indicate the inter-positional relations that made students feel powerless to question the headteacher. It speaks of how school hierarchy positions the headteacher in school decision-making. The first question indicates that students do

not feel they have alternative avenues to challenge the headteacher whereas the second highlights their frustrations that education administrators fail to audit.

Yes, we have been lucky. Since last year we have been supplied many school uniforms. But can you imagine that parents are no longer buying uniforms for their kids because we have been given these uniforms. This was why I usually say to those with tattered uniforms, 'tell your parents to get uniform for you because we will send you home the next time you come to school without a proper uniform'. (One-on-one discussion with Headteacher)

The following are excerpts from headteacher's responses to my questions concerning the distribution of textbooks to students.

Me: I see you have many textbooks piled up here.

HT: *Yes, my brother, because we keep them and we don't give it out to the children to destroy*

Me: But I thought the books are to be given to students.

HT: *Mr Mensah, the books are to be given to students but we don't trust these students can take care of the books.*

Me: What will the school benefit if the books are kept neat?

HT: *At least we can have more books in future.*

Me: So what will the school benefit if there were more books that are not used by students?

TH: *Hahaha, well, maybe we have to start giving the books to the students but my headache is that we may run short of books in the future.*

The headteacher's comments highlight how she invokes her authority as school level manager with respect to the implementation of the Ghana government's free textbook and school uniforms policy. When compared with students' comments it highlights the inter-positional tensions taking place in the school and the authoritarianism inherent in the positioning of the headteacher as a school manager. For example, as I will discuss in section 6.4, the *Unified Code of Discipline for Basic Education Schools* authorises the headteacher to use different control devices to discipline other school members.

By using control and discipline devices such as prefects, class monitors, duty teachers and a timetable, you [headteacher] will promote the process of self-government (Headteachers Handbook, 2006:12).

In the school policy, the headteacher is advised to ensure that *effort must be made to cultivate mutual trust because the co-operation of all members of staff is very much*

desired (p.257). When I discussed teacher authority with students during interviews, they usually made statements that indicate their awareness of the co-operation among teachers (see comments below):

You cannot challenge the teachers You cannot ask the headteacher any question. They will beat you. Sir, it means you don't respect. They will beat you.
(Student 1, Male)

The teachers will come to school late; they will say don't talk but they will sit outside and be talking to each other. They will beat you if you talk. The only way they will not beat you is for you to stop school (Student 6, Female)
(Group Interview with students on Monday November 7, 2011)

The phrases *the teachers*, *they will*, which were often used in students' comments illustrate students' perception of the co-operation between the headteacher and teachers in exercising power. In the study school, the headteacher has the authority to appoint teachers to various power positions such as assistant headteacher and teachers-on-duty to help maintain discipline (control over students) mainly because they collectively function as part of school staff. Class teachers 'collude' with the head teacher in 'silencing' students.

Prefects constitute the next level of assistants to the headteacher. The *Unified Code of Discipline for Basic Education Schools* provides that *school prefects will assist in maintaining the desired discipline in the school* (Headteachers' Handbook, 2006:257). Students explained in the group interviews that:

...teachers select the prefects all the time. The teachers say they [prefects] are respectful... (Student 1)

Teacher's responded to the issue of prefect selection with the following:

Teacher 1: *We teach the children so we know the disciplined ones.... We select those we can trust, those who are obedient because if you [student] disobey a prefect we will discipline you. We will cane you.*

Teacher 2: *In choosing the prefects we select those with good behaviour so they can be role models to their friends... We make sure you respect the authority of prefects, which is one of the things the children must be trained to do!*

Implied in the teachers' comments is how social hierarchies constructed in school policy situate teachers as those responsible for the moral construction of students (Thornberg, 2009). Teachers select those they think have imbibed principles of discipline and self-governmentality to help implore other students to do so. Prefects therefore become teachers' agents, a position which gives them power over their fellow students. The following examples of students' (non-prefects') views on prefects further illustrate this point:

The teachers appoint the prefect so you cannot challenge the prefects. (Student 1, Male)

Sir, the teachers will cane you if you challenge the prefect. (Student 2, Female)

These students' comments are indicative of their experiences with peer regulation of behaviour and its connection identity, which is taken further in Chapter Seven. This would suggest that prefects are in a better position than non-prefects. However, the following quotes suggest something different.

... You cannot ask the prefect to tell the teacher anything on behalf of us [students]. They will say I will not go... (Student 3, Male)

The teachers do not allow even the prefects to get close to them. Even the Office Girl does not go closer to the teachers (Student 13, Female)

These comments suggest that prefects do not work as student representatives because they 'fear' teachers although school policy requires that school relations *should be based on agreement than fear* [so that] *knowledge and ideas are pooled and decisions are shared* (Headteachers' Handbook, 2006:11). Implicit in students' comments is the social distance between teachers and students that places boundaries on mutual engagements (Harber, 2004). It suggests a unidirectional power relationship in which students cannot speak back to teacher authority in the school.

Students generally described those who get close to teachers with expressions such as *teacher's lover*, *provide services to teacher at home*, *teacher's boy* or *teacher's sister or brother*. Thus the generality of students located at the bottom of the school hierarchy seemed not to have any recognised structure through which their opinions could be expressed. Neither did I find any official systems or channels of communication in

school policy regarding how students' grievances were to be communicated and discussed. This finding is also highlighted in a national study (CRDD, 2001:57) of rights and equity in Basic Schools in Ghana, which concludes that students "tended to suffer in silence" (CRDD, 2001:57). The following examples from a prefect's comments describe their positioning.

They say I am the school prefect but I cannot say anything. When they say you are prefect, they say you are respectful... because they send you to buy things for them. They send you to call people... but they will not listen. You must always go if they send you. ... Sir, even when your teacher is teaching another teacher will come and send you. The only thing you can tell them is that this student is late or talking... nothing!

(Interview with Student 9, Male Prefect on Wednesday July 13, 2011)

Thus prefects did not see their position in terms of its formative possibilities – a good way to develop leadership skills, responsibilities and to empower students. This male prefect complained about the service function of prefects as errand boys or girls who serve teachers. What is more interesting is their positioning as teachers' agents - of controlling students and reporting misbehaviour to teachers. The prefects' comments, suggest that they serve as "sub-oppressors" to further impose the hierarchies of power (Freire, 1993:27). Another prefect (Student 10) corroborates the regulatory effects of their functions:

Sometimes too you cannot write your friend's name because you will lose your friend if they cane her or him. Sometimes we become confused because we also talk but nobody writes our names. But the teachers force us to become enemies to our friends or brothers and sisters because we are all from the same villages. (Group interview with Prefects, Monday, August 1, 2011)

The above comment shows how prefects' positions compel them to report colleagues, brothers, sisters, cousins or friends. A female student (Student 2) described the effect of her sister's previous role as a prefect:

Sir, let me tell you something. My sister has stopped school because she was the class prefect for P5. She did not write names because their teacher did not come to school that day. The next day the teacher come and said 'give the list of talkatives'. She did not get the list so the teacher caned her mercilessly. She cannot do anything to the teacher so she stopped the school. She said she will not come to school again because she cannot continue writing names. (Group interview with Prefects, Monday, August 1, 2011)

I would argue that, prefects' status as constrained actors in the service of teachers radiates "their perception of themselves as oppressed". Their functions of serving teachers and reporting colleagues reflect "their submersion in the reality of oppression" (Freire, 1993:27). As Freire would argue further,

The very structure of their thought has been conditioned by the contradictions of the concrete, existential situation by which they were shaped ... [t]heir ideal ... at a certain moment of their existential experience, adopt an attitude of "adhesion" to the oppressor (Freire, 1993:27).

Authority zones established in school policy, that is, teacher/headteacher authority, produce stratified relations that work against students positioned lowest in the pecking order (see Figure 2). Prefects' comments indicate that the network of prefects is essentially used as a disciplinary device: the monitoring 'eyes' teachers use to further impose power regimes on the generality of students in school. Whereas prefects exercise control over their peers, the prefect system represented 'fantasies of empowerment' because they do not serve as student representatives. These findings support the views of Gore (2001) and Harber (2004) that schooling is controlling, particularly in terms of limiting students' spaces through implementing policies that position them at the lowest level of school hierarchy.

Hierarchical school relations operate through the dynamics of gender and adult-child relations that require students to perform subordinate child-like identities (Dunne & Ananga, 2013). Students' narratives illustrate "discursive violence" associated with authoritarianism to the extent that they (including prefects) cannot challenge teacher authority (Vasquez, 2009:1). In other studies in the field of international education, such authoritarian stress on conformity and obedience have been associated with coloniser relations with colonised subjects, for example, in British India (Alexander, 2000:92) Francophone Africa (Moumouni, 1968) and Portuguese Mozambique (Azevedo, 1980; Barnes, 1982). The question might be - why would authoritarian school relations in the post-colonial era be attributed to colonial absences? Molteno et al. (2000:13) addressed this question in stating that education systems are essentially modelled on those that were introduced by colonial powers (Britain, Spain, France and Portugal)

hundred years ago or more but have since be repudiated. My concern, as Molteno et al. stated, is that such systems of schooling

... remain entrenched in the ex-colonies and education ministry officials continue to be resistant to the suggestion of changes that appear to offer anything less rigidly defined than their conception. (Molteno et al., 2000:13)

Studies of contemporary schooling in other former colonies (India, Lebanon, Liberia, Mali, Mongolia, Mozambique, Pakistan, Peru and Trinidad and Tobago) also support this assertion that colonial education systems persist in these former colonies (see Harber, 1989; Alexander, 2000; Molteno et al., 2000). Harber (2004) explained that many post-colonial governments in Africa retained those schooling systems for political purposes of their own. In that continuum, Adjei (2007) insists that the inherited formal school system in Ghana builds on rather than critically reforms the colonial education system. This would suggest that curriculum content, social relations and the structural vectors of power are all equally sustained.

Section 5.3 and 5.4 addresses how teachers constantly exercise power visibly in order to establish or maintain their authority over students through the instrumentality of the school timetable and code of discipline at the school level. I begin in 5.3 by exploring the school timetable as a technology of power.

5.3 School timetable

A key element of institutional colonialism is constant surveillance that leads to subject resignation or self-regulation (Foucault, 1977; Freire, 1993). In that context, this section further explores school timetable as a key public management device, that is, a vital surveillance tool for checking regularity, punctuality and bureaucratic orderly arrangements (Shipman, 1971; Foucault, 1995). As such, I did not follow the pattern of human capital orientations that typically analyse the school timetable in terms of time spent on task or economic costs or productive time use (Becker, 1964; Parsons, 1974; Asunka et al., 2008). I draw on the works of Foucault (1977) and Bernstein (2000) to explore the school timetable as a regulatory device that helps to instantiate the existing hierarchical distribution of power discussed in Section 6.2. I conceptualise the school timetable as the disciplinary device that beyond the valorisation of particular knowledge

forms (mathematics, science etc.) promotes values, attitudes and behaviour such as habits of obedience, order and punctuality (London, 2002).

In the research school, the timetable (see appendix 5) was the main tool for official regimentation. It presents the weekly series of events (e.g. morning roll call, morning assembly and subjects to be taught each day) that pinpoint the main surveillance opportunities to check on students and to discipline them. The timetable specified when school opened (6.30am) and when it closes (1.30pm). It outlined official daily activities that are to be carried out during school hours (between reporting and closing time). Those activities include a silence period, assembly periods, break periods, registration, and the list of subjects to be taught in what class and at what particular times by teachers.

All members of the school are required to follow/conform to the timetable. The bellboys (two male students) constantly monitor the timetable and ring the school bell that prompts all members of the school to act according to the time (table). The Headteachers' Handbook (2006:12) requires the headteacher to *set a good example ...such as coming to school ... punctually*. The Handbook requires that teachers sign the time-book each morning so that the headteacher can check teacher attendance and punctuality.

However, a female student explained: *Sir, the teachers will come to school late but they will cane us. Why?* Her comment portrays the vertical power relations among teachers and students. Implicit in the comment is that compliance with the timetable is more rigidly enforced for students than for teachers. Students had little such freedom as the timetable regulated behaviour and was used to regulate all but especially the students. For the students, contravening the timetable was regulated fiercely whereas the headteacher and teachers contravene with impunity; however, they used prefects to ensure that students did not. Also, teachers mostly do not follow the school timetable or the ring of the school bell to teach the subjects as required. Teachers chose how many subjects to teach in the day or in the week, and at what time. This indicates the

vertical power relations between teachers and students. It speaks to Parker's (2000) idea that institutional arrangements can give power to some and not others. In the case study school, it gave power to teachers (they do not follow or the ring of the school bell to teach all subjects as required by the school timetable) and not students.

The routines described in the timetable were key to the running of the school. Over time pupils through constant repetition come to perform this as normality and internalise the constructed form through self-regulation. For students, the timetable dictates when to report, when they are allowed to get out of the classroom for break and when they are allowed to go back home. For students in the study school, the first ring of the school bell requires that all students line up for early morning roll call. Students who were not in school by that time were regarded as latecomers. Then all students observe five minutes of silence inside their respective classrooms. During the silence period, no student was allowed to either move or make any sound. The prefects and seniors-on-duty patrolled the corridors and recorded the names of those students breaking the silence.

Morning Assembly is an important activity outlined on the timetable. All students line up (form rolls) according to classes. Commands were issued as though students were at inspection parade and undergoing morning military drills. The routine commands include:

Keep quiet!
Parade Attention!
Shortest in front!
Stretch your arms!
Straighten-up your lines!
Arms forward stretch!
Arms down!
Left turn!
Right turn!
Stand at ease!

Students were expected to obey each command without hesitation. Students who fail to obey quickly and exactly are flogged with canes. Usually, time was spent during

morning assembly to inspect students. On one occasion, for example, morning assembly started at 7.15am but the marching song began at 8.30am. On that occasion the headteacher explicitly admitted the 'waste' of instructional time on morning assembly in commanding a teacher,

Kofi³, Why? Ye kye dodo; Assembly nkwa aden!! Bu wo mu din nayer pon

The headteachers' statement above literally translates as,

Kofi, Why? We are wasting too much time on Assembly!! Beat them harder so we can dismiss the Assembly.

I wondered whether beating students harder would speed up things. My thought is that the morning assembly practices further explicitly demonstrates the authority of the headteacher and teachers to dismiss timetable requirements. They could keep students standing at the Assembly for as long as it takes (7.15am - 8.30am). Before the students filed pass to their classrooms, a teacher-on-duty announced:

Headteacher si se owo kro ne kawuo, ye din na nkeka wuhun. In the classroom, make sure you pin your buttocks to the chair and do not make any move.

The first part of the command literally translates:

Headteacher is commanding that even if a snake bites you, be quiet and do not make any move.

Another teacher-on-duty issued a fresh command: *if you fool, mede aba be bu wo*, which literally translates: *if you fool about, I will lash you with the cane*. My reflections on those moments indicated that teachers used the morning assembly to remind and re-assert their power, authority and surveillance position over students.

School worship (expressing collective devotion to God) is another timetable requirement. Some students expressed their misgivings about school worship in the following comments.

Sir, it is not right that we should all sing Christian songs. I am not a Christian ... but they will force you to do what Christians do when you come to school. But the school is for our community not Christians! Okay, government pay the

³ Kofi is not the real name of the teacher

teachers ... is that why we must all become Christians in school? (Student 3, Male)

Sir, I am a Christian but the teachers don't have to cane people for coming late to worship. I think it is not the best. Sir, did the bible say we should cane people for coming to Church late? If you do that people will not come to church, they will stay at home. But here teachers cane us because it is school. Whether you are Christian or not they will cane you! The problem is not worship but the teachers will say 'everyone close your eyes'. Then they cane people for not closing their eyes or singing. We don't do that at church. (Student 7, Male Prefect)

Last term they [teachers] asked me to pray at Assembly. When I started praying Muslim prayer the teacher asked me to stop. All the students were laughing... The teacher said 'you will pray again'. Then I prayed Christian prayer. (Student 10, Female Prefect)

The teachers make sure we all recite the 'Lord's Prayer' every morning. Sometimes we all recite Psalm 27 or we say, 'the Grace' which is Christian prayers. (Student 13, Male)

...worship is not bad. We all worship in different ways. Sir, the problem is that this school we only sing Christian songs during assembly every day and at worship. Everything is Christianity. If you don't do it they will cane you. (Student 1, Male)

(Group Interview, November 4, 2011)

What reverberates through these students' comments is not opposition to worship but their sense of powerlessness to challenge school religious practices. Although school policy had no provision on the form of worship and how it should be organised, the students' comments indicated the school implemented the requirement on the timetable with reference to Christian guidelines. The students' comments call our attention to the works of Pfann (1965), Debrunner (1967), Quartey (2007) and Asare-Danso (2008) concerning the Christian missionary roots of schooling in Ghana and its persistence. The comments also show both Christians and non-Christian students had problems with how teachers monitor conformity and regularity to school worship. I would argue that such practice is reminiscent of Christian missionary practices in the

colonial education system where “the task of public schooling was not so much to develop new skills for the industrial sector as to inculcate habits of conformity, discipline and morality” (Green, 1990:59). I discuss the impact of this religious regulation in Section 7.2.2 of Chapter Seven.

Following registration (when teachers check student attendance to identify absentees and latecomers), students remain in classrooms until the bell rings and the bellboy announces, “break time please!” During instructional hours, class teachers maintain surveillance over students by ensuring that they do not loiter around or make ‘noise’. And, in practice, students did not feel they had the right to question as in the comments below

You mean what can we do or what? You cannot challenge the teachers. ... May be you can only stop school. Even if you talk ... you bring more problems to yourself. Eh! You just keep quiet... what are you going to say? Eh! Who are you? Sir, forget... (Student 1, Male)

Sir, you don't know what you are saying ... because I told you that some of us the teachers beat us because we talk. If anyone talk or do anything they will cane him every day. Me every day they cane me. Even today Sir will cane me when we go to class, I know. (Student 2, Female)

... if any student talk they will die. The teacher will cane you and cane you. Eeee! Maybe you can talk because you are not here or you are old but ... no we cannot talk. (Student 12, Male)

(Group interview, Monday August 22, 2011)

The students’ comments indicate that the practical exercise of teacher authority in classroom discourse include telling students not to talk in class (even when the teacher was absent from school). Any sound considered ‘noise’ was severely punished. Students would remain quiet in their respective classrooms until the bell rings and the bellboy announces, “closing please.” I heard a Circuit Supervisor⁴ announce on one

⁴ The Circuit Supervisors are education officers from the District Directorate of Education who have official responsibility for regular monitoring and supervision of schools. Each supervisor monitors a group of schools in one zone (Circuit) of an education district and are expected to produce reports for school improvement.

occasion: *this school is properly organised ... [and] the students are serious about academic work*. Students were asked to clap for the good image they achieved for the school. However, I would argue that such uncritical commentary tends to foreground findings from Greens' historical analysis of schooling in England, France, the United States and Prussia in the nineteenth century which found the main concern of public schooling was to "counter the widespread problems of social order" (Green, 1990:59). In this case the Circuit Supervisor's comments have a multiplier effect that legitimates or gives validity to violence by the powerful (teachers) against the powerless (students). It works to embed a perception that regulation and excessive control of students were worthy of favourable report; and so further exacerbated the tensions between certain students who felt oppressed on one hand, and the teachers and prefects who were enforcers of rules on the other.

My observations and the following interview quote from students indicated how their perspectives on classroom regulation including controls on communication.

Sir you cannot go out if it is not break time on the timetable. They will not allow you to talk... because they don't want people who are passing by the school to know that they are not teaching us. But teachers would walk around talking to each other even when the timetable say they should teach... today we have not learnt anything. Yesterday too the same thing! It was three days ago that we studied maths and that is all. Then they say don't talk in class. And sir they don't even give you any assignment or book to study.

(Group interview, Monday August 22, 2011)

What can be argued from the comments is that although the school timetable regulated school activities, its application was more constraining for students than it was for the teachers. It provided the framework within which the headteacher and teachers inculcated habits of conformity, obedience and discipline required of organised working populations. Its application reflected a function of moulding future workers with subordinate values and behaviours necessary for the modern bureaucratic work place and its social order – regularity, routine, monotonous work and discipline. Shipman described this kind of schooling as "punishments, lack of reward and regular attendance at place of work are the habits to be learned in school" (Shipman, 1971:54-55). Teachers, as the school management team, could flout the timetable but students

could not. However, teachers drew on the regime provided by the school timetable to regulate student activities. In the next section I discuss the school code of discipline and teacher authority to administer punishment including caning.

5.4 School Code of Discipline

A coloniser's conscious effort to subordinate the colonised through institutionalised discipline and punishment is a central focus of anti-colonial ideological critiques. In Africa, Uchendu (1979) contends that a key purpose of colonial education was the subordination of natives through schooling. In this section, I draw on Foucault's idea of schools as institutions that are meant to 'discipline and punish'. In so doing, I explored what school policy: *Unified Code of Discipline for Basic Education Schools* describes as:

the disciplinary measures that may deter pupils from committing offences and compel them to exercise self-control and self-discipline in their day-to-day activities (Headteachers' Handbook: 257).

As discussed in section 5.2, school policy tasks the headteacher as the pre-eminent authority figure with the duty of *maintaining discipline* (Headteachers' Handbook, 2006:11). School policy required that conscious efforts are made to promote self-regulation among students and teachers. For example, it is provided that, if a student *is a habitual latecomer or truant influence him or her to change by appointment as bellboy or post-boy* (15). Central to this type of discipline is the notion of promoting *the kind of discipline that lasts and is carried outside the school into the community* (11). The underlying idea is to self-regulation and peer regulation or a type of discipline involving teachers and students:

Pupils and teachers should learn to discipline themselves and be the first to disapprove of their peers who break the agreed rules. (Headteachers Handbook, 2006:11-12).

Part of the headteacher's duty of maintaining discipline is the concurrent *duty ... to punish pupils* or students (13). It is provided that *punishment should be severe enough to act as a deterrent to others* (Headteachers Handbook, 2006:257). What punishment is "severe enough" is not defined in the Handbook. Thus the severity of punishment as a form of control is left to the discretion of the individual administering the disciplinary

measure at a given moment. However, the *Unified Code of Discipline for Basic Education Schools* spells out punishments for various ‘offences’ (see suggested list of Offences and recommended punishments in Appendix 7). By way of summary, as in Figure 3, the recommended punishments outlined for offences include warning, caning, groundwork (scrubbing veranda or toilet, weeding etc.), counselling, withdrawal, suspension from school, and detention.

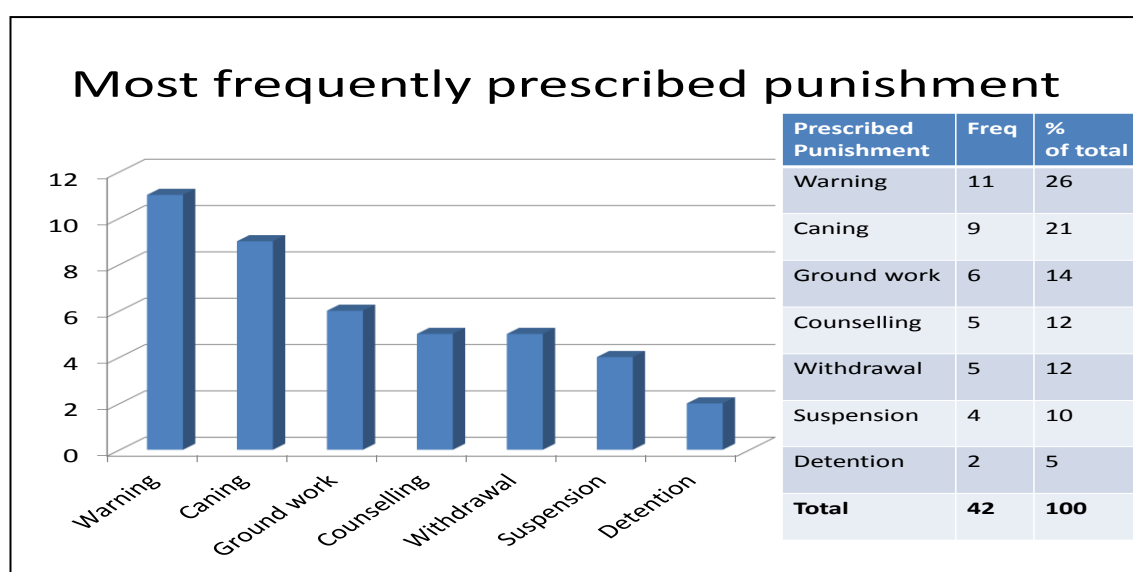


Figure 5.2: Most frequently prescribed punishment in the Unified Code of Discipline for Basic Education Schools.

The Figure 5.2 shows that caning is most frequently (21%) prescribed as punishment for all offences aside warning (26%) students. The representation showed that caning is prescribed for nine (9) out of the 18 offences outlined in the Code of Discipline. Those punishments include fighting, quarrelling/teasing, stealing, squandering of school fees, illicit use of drugs including drinking alcohol and smoking, flouting authority, assault and sexual misconduct. Groundwork was the next most frequent (14%). It is prescribed for as punishment for six (6) offences including littering, fighting, quarrelling/teasing, stealing, assault and leaving school without permission. Counselling (12%) is prescribed for five (5) offences – habitual lateness, absenteeism/truancy/leaving school under false pretence, tale-bearing/telling lies, stealing, squandering of fees, illicit drug use and failure to do homework.

Withdrawal/restriction from school activities and suspension together constitute 22% whereas detention is the least frequently (5%) prescribed punishment. Withdrawal of privileges is suggested as punishment for habitual lateness, flouting of authority, assault, sexual misconduct, pregnancy/termination of pregnancy. Suspension is prescribed as punishment for flouting authority, assault on a colleague, assault on staff and sexual misconduct. Detention is suggested for failure to do homework and failure to do homework. The following excerpts from the Headteachers' Handbook below from are key provisions that limit the use of particular punishments.

1. *Under normal circumstances, suspension should not exceed 5 days and should be applied to Junior Secondary pupils only*
2. *Cases of suspension should be brought to the notice of the parents/guardians of the pupils concerned*
3. *Caning should not exceed 4 strokes and must be administered by the Headmaster/mistress or under his/her supervision and recorded*
4. *Sanctions should in all cases be appropriate to the age of the pupil and the misdemeanour involved*
5. *In order that children do not develop aversion to farming/gardening, this type of punishment should be used as sparingly as possible*
6. *Notwithstanding the above guidelines each case should be considered on its own merit.*
7. *Prizes/rewards should be given to pupils to encourage good behaviour in the school (Headteachers Handbook, 2006:262)*

As the provisions indicated, the *Unified Code of Discipline for Basic Education Schools* allows suspensions and caning of up to 4 strokes although punishment should be *appropriate to the age of the pupil*. It is important to note that whereas physical punishment is now outlawed in most countries, the Education Act of 1961 (as amended by Act 778, 2008) which is the principal legislation on education in Ghana authorises the headteacher to administer caning as punishment. This may be argued as a legitimisation of violence against children, but it further highlights the persistence of schools as “coercive and violent places” (Adams, 1991:40). Some school policy provisions in the Headteachers' Handbook which are intended to secure protection of children are outlined are the following:

- *Illegal punishment, violence and brutal acts against the pupils are criminal offences for which the teacher can be taken to a court of law*
- *Corporal punishment must be administered only by you, but on the rare occasions when you delegate this responsibility, must supervise its administration*
- *Whipping or beating pupils because they cannot read or work sums correctly is not allowed.*
- *You must keep a punishment book for serious punishments such as suspension and caning. These should not occur often. The purpose of this record is to protect pupils from unreasonable punishment, violence and brutality from teachers and to avoid giving parents and guardians cause for negative criticism of teachers*

(Headteachers Handbook, 2006:13)

Several issues can be deduced from the provisions listed above. The first is possibility of abuse: illegal punishment, violence and brutal acts against students. Corporal punishment (caning) is permitted but must be administered only by the headteacher. The headteacher can delegate the *responsibility* to cane only on *rare occasions* and must supervise its administration. Suspension and corporal punishment *should not occur often*. The headteacher must keep record of all caning and suspension in a clearly labelled punishment book (see specimen on page 14 of Headteachers Handbook excerpt in attachment). The record of punishment must include the date of the punishments, personal data (name, sex and age) of the offending student, the offence, the punishment, the name of the teacher administering the punishment and the comment of the headteacher.

However, interview responses from students, discussions with headteacher/teachers and my observation of disciplinary practices revealed some mismatch between policy and practice. The headteacher explained,

Anyway the truth is that I feel caning is a violation of children, so my personal philosophy is that I don't cane even my children. I have delegated that authority to the teachers ... [and] I don't cane at all. No, No. The teachers cane because they are younger and more youthful. I don't think I want to get involved.

Her comments have two dimensions. First, she feels caning constitutes violation of children. As a personal philosophy, she will not cane or *want to get involved* in caning students. Thus in contrast with school policy the headteacher did not administer the

cane. However, in keeping with policy requirements and in fulfilment of her positioning as an authority figure she delegated the responsibility of caning to the teachers. When I asked her why she would not stop caning in the school, the headteacher explained,

Sir, the fact is that the children here are stubborn; especially the boys. It is not easy to control them. In fact that is why I have been telling you I want more male teachers. If you drop the cane, the children will rule the teachers in this school. We are here at the school level and we know what is happening. I will say we need to cane them ... I don't think we can control the children without caning them.

These comments represent a tension in the personal and professional positioning of the headteacher on caning. Whereas the headteacher reported that she would not use the cane on children at home, she ironically, emphasised a willingness to use the same punishment to fulfil the disciplinary mission of the school. In addition the headteacher believes caning is the only way to control students and approves it as the predominant mode of punishment in the school. The comment does not only represent a rationalised normalisation of caning as the only form of punishment. It represents contractions in how the headteacher's philosophy that caning constitutes a violation of children interfaces with the professional requirement to control students. This apparently contradictory positioning over corporal punishment is further illustrated in the fact that the headteacher *want more male teachers* to administer the cane. This, I would argue, endorses a gendered culture of male entitlements in enforcing hegemonic modes of masculine identity of male teachers as disciplinarians. There is another gender undertone where the headteacher's conviction is that boys are more stubborn and difficult to control. This is observed by teachers. For example, when three students [one male and two females] reported to school late, the teacher-on-duty declared, *you are a boy so you will receive four and you girls will receive three each...* On another occasion, a male teacher commented, *you boys are more stubborn than girls, you must receive more lashes*. On that occasion, the boys received five strokes while each girl received three.

However, the headteacher's comment also reflects the rationality in which the institution is grounded; a rationality of school as a place where students become "a

problem” (to borrow an expression from MacLure et al., 2012) to be solved through regulation. Bhabha (1994:70) suggests that constructing people as a problem indicates colonization:

colonial discourse to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types ..., in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction.

From Bhabha’s understanding, the headteacher’s comment illustrates how professional disciplinary requirements to exercise control over students override her personal belief that caning perpetuates a culture of violence against children. The comments also highlight social class and gender dimension in school discipline. Class distinction is evident where the children in the school (unlike the headteacher’s children at home) can only be controlled by violence. This reliance on caning as the main form of punishment speaks back in terms of violence against children in school, which stands in opposition to international human rights based frameworks such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). The idea that teachers cannot control students without caning also suggests a dearth of knowledge or gap in teacher training in alternative behaviour modification techniques that focus on re-enforcing good behaviour and constructive forms of democratic discipline (Harber, 2004). One way to deal with this inertia may be an engagement with Bernstein’s (2000) ideas about re-contextualisation. This will mean decontextualising school practices from the colonial frame of logic focused on authoritarianism and production of conformist to Ghana’s democratic context which values and respects children (see for example, Ghana Children’s Act, 1998).

When we discussed how caning is administered, the headteacher stated,

Honestly, some teachers are abusing the caning. ... I am also a parent; in fact some teachers are wicked in caning some of the children. If I am standing there, I tell them [teachers] how many lashes to give. ...the policy says we must give a fair hearing. But we don’t do this. We just cane the children. Let me tell you that some children have stopped school because of the way my teachers cane. Some have changed to private school because of the same reason. The teachers have made the children afraid of everybody including myself [headteacher]. I believe they [student] think I am in support and they are right because they see me telling the teachers to cane them. I don’t know how I can

change this.... (One-on-One discussion with Headteacher, Thursday December 2, 2011)

Thus the headteacher observed some teachers administer caning to the effect that contravene school policy but would make little effort to intervene. The comment 'speaks' to the regulatory effects of caning: students transferring to other (private) schools or dropping out. It also highlights that teachers administer the cane with reference to official guidelines. Although the Headteachers' Handbook (2006:13) listed *caning* as one of two *serious punishments* which *should not occur too often*, my observation of caning showed that the provisions were rarely followed. It was rare to see 30 minutes pass without caning.

From this background I asked if she keeps records of caning and how students were protected from "unreasonable punishments, violence and brutality" as directed in the Headteachers' Handbook (2006:13). She responded,

Eh! You make me laugh loud. We have a punishment book and I can show it to you but how can I possibly enter all these canings going on. I can't even supervise all these canings that occur each day. It is not possible. We have the book but I don't use it. I don't think I made any entries since I came to this school. That is the difficulty. You see, the problem is I cannot be everywhere all the time. If you complain about how teachers cane, some will stop caning totally. The problem is you cannot control the children alone. So, I appeal to them to be humane. I tell them, 'please know that some of these children may become future leaders so treat them kindly'. I tell the teachers, 'if you mishandle any student beyond reasonable treatment, I will personally lead the parents to press a case against you at the education office and anywhere.' If you check properly you see the P3 teacher doesn't like caning and the children will be disturbing. It is because I complained about the way she was handling one particular child. ... Sometimes as the headteacher you are locked-up in this kind of difficult situation and you don't know what to do. (One-on-One discussion with Headteacher, Thursday December 2, 2011)

The headteacher's comments further showed that discipline is understood as only through violence and not negotiated with students. She seemed grounded in the fear of losing teacher co-operation to control students. So, as teacher authority acts as a

counter hegemonic force to headteacher authority, students had little protection from caning.

In my conversations with teachers, they often explained caning with expressions such as

- *there is nothing wrong with it*
- *we all went through it*
- *it is the only way these children can be disciplined*
- *it is not possible to discipline these children without caning them*

When we discussed how girls are handled during caning, a female teacher (Teacher 2) responded:

We all went through it. There is nothing wrong with it. You just have to be careful when caning them.... I cane them at the buttocks too. We all do.

The comments indicate how the teacher's sex has little relation to attitudes to caning. Both female and male teachers cane students for offences including those for which caning was not prescribed. Students were caned for reporting to school late, not performing morning duties, talking in class or at school assembly, disobeying teachers, giving wrong answers in class, and fighting in school or class. Other offences include but not limited to refusal to offer prayer during school worship, inability to solve problems or failure to respond correctly to teacher's question during classroom instruction.

When we discussed the modes of discipline in the school, a primary four male student said (and other students agreed) that:

Student 3: *You see the problem is that everything the teachers don't even ask you any question before they lash you. I think we are in a democratic country so I should have the chance to defend myself. As for here the teacher will cane you the moment the class prefect say you have talked or you are late to school. I think it is bad.*
(Group Interview, November 4, 2011)

Student comments about how teachers punish include:

Student 3: *Sir, they cane everywhere! If you stay calm, they will still hit your head before they beat your bottom. When they finish and you are going they cane your legs. Sometimes they say, 'bring your palm!'*

Another time they will cane your fingers when they say 'do like this' or they will cane your back. Sir, simply they will cane the place that will pain you.

Student 9: *Sir, ... the way the teachers punish us is not good at all ... even our parents don't punish us like that. ... Every time caning, caning, caning. Why? They just do anything they like to you. Sir, me I think it is not good.*

Student 2: *Sir, if you don't like coming to school always, one day when you come the teacher will call you at assembly and you bend your waist or hold the pillar. Sometimes they will ask the big boys to hold your hands. ... and Sir, they will cane you in front of the whole school*
(Group Interview, November 4, 2011)

These comments highlighted elements of humiliation in how students were treated during caning. The comments of Student 3 suggest teachers aim to inflict pain in keeping with the school policy requirement that punishment should be severe enough to serve as deterrent. Some studies in Ghana (CHRAJ, 2011; Ofori et al., 2011) found that some students were injured during caning. Beneath the surface of student comments is understanding of caning as a major constraint for students. The comments of Student 9, echoes Adams' (1991:40) reflections that the problem of schooling is not its disciplinary nature but "often being more punitive than the home". Other student comments were more emotional.

Student 1: *Sir, you feel very bad in front of your friends. Everyone looks at you somehow, as if you are not a normal human being.*

Student 11: *You feel that you are not a human being. Me, I become worried and sad.*

Student 13: *Sir, simply you feel ashamed. Look at what the teacher did to me in the class today. Is that how you treat a human being? They just want you to feel bad and ashamed. You just feel that you are nobody.*

Student 15: *Sir, if it were you how will you feel? You just feel disgraced....*

Further student comments on caning include:

Student 4: *Those who don't come to school every day suffer more than all of us. They cane them. Six canes!*

Student 12: *If you come to school late ... you cannot dodge the cane.*

Student 13: *Those who don't like coming to school at all ... they suffer from the cane.*

Student 14: *Sir in this school, if you don't want the cane always, just come to school always and come early.*

The student comments indicate that latecomers and truants suffered much of the caning although the Headteachers Handbook (2006:15) provides that habitual latecomers should be influenced to change by appointment as bellboy or post-boy. Also, teachers often 'call upon' the cane as the 'rod of discipline' and disgrace that is a constant reminder of the distributed power positions in school policy. Such teacher enactments seemed to traverse school policy which also students felt powerless to challenge. Whereas this may be pejoratively treated as enactment of teacher agency, it justifies the point from historical explorations of Shipman (1971), Green (1990), Adams (1991) and Harber (2004) that schools in developing countries have maintained the colonial characteristics as extremely coercive and violent places. In reference to those disciplinary characteristics of schooling, Shute (1992:7) specifically argues that "schools have not necessarily much to do with education ... they were mainly institutions of control". Control, as Molteno et al. (2000) found in other ex-colonies mainly involves corporal punishment in the form of caning, which in Luggard's (1922) colonial frame of logic passes as a way of moulding behaviour.

5.5 Conclusion

The main points developed in this chapter suggest the persistence of authoritarian relations in schooling. The analysis of official school hierarchies indicates states of domination emanating from school policy where "power relations are fixed in such a way that they are perpetually asymmetrical" (Foucault, 1995:292). School policy texts hardly provide any official systems or channels of communication regarding how students' voice or grievances were to be communicated and discussed. The prefects teachers appoint from among students do feel that they have little expressive capacity:

the ability to choose, to democratically engage, to question how things are done or to demand rights as full members of the institution. The school timetable is used as a technology of power, a monitoring device that commands students' conformity and regulation that teachers can escape to contravene their industrial/professional and contractual obligations to teach students according to the timetable. The school code of discipline supports physical punishment (caning) as a way of controlling students. I argued that caning served to legitimise school violence; and with the school timetable and policy hierarchies concomitantly established violent social relations between teachers and students. The next chapter continues the analysis of these relations by focusing on curriculum knowledge practices.

CHAPTER SIX

SCHOOLING AS REPRODUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE

6.1 Introduction

This chapter continues the analysis of schooling as control by exploring the delivered curriculum, language of instruction, classroom interactions and assessment practices as key in the reproduction of the labour force and ideological legitimization of the social order. The data analysed in this chapter mainly drawn from observations and interviews are discussed in three main sections. The first section draws on critiques of the delivered curriculum (standardised national curriculum) as rationalist 'prescription' that strips out the cultural basis of the school curriculum (Kelly, 1986; Freire, 1993; Bernstein, 2000). The second addresses the use of English (foreign language) for instruction focusing on linguistic competency and its constitutive effect in school and the society as a whole. The third explores teaching and learning in the classroom based on the prescribed curriculum. The last section discusses assessment based on the prescribed curriculum. The main concern is not only *what* knowledge is important but also *whose* knowledge is important in the curricula, *what and whose* interests such knowledge serves, and *how* the curriculum serves differing interests (Cohen et al., 2007).

6.2 Curriculum subjects

This section explores the perspectives of students (and teachers) concerning the delivered curriculum, specifically, the approved national curriculum subjects taught in the school. My understanding of the National Curriculum follows previous conceptions that it is a statement of the knowledge that all students attending school from five to 16 years should learn in school (Institute of Ideas Education Forum, 2012). I do not seek to challenge the use of national curriculum because

the highest achieving systems - almost without exception - express this entitlement in the form of subjects. It is subjects which give stability to a curriculum and provide the boundaries within which teachers establish their professional identities and pupils [students] develop their identities as learners. This does not mean that all such curricula are the same: they vary in content to reflect different countries' history and culture. (Institute of Ideas Education Forum, 2012:4)

What I did was to follow traditions of curriculum analysis by exploring students' and teachers' perspectives on the curriculum relevance in terms of content emphasised – approved subjects on the school timetable and time allotted to the various subjects.

In terms of approved subjects I looked at the subjects allowed on the school timetable. The school timetable (see Appendix 5) indicates that the approved subjects for the Lower primary were Creative Arts, English Language (including Library⁵), Ghanaian Language (Fante), Mathematics, Natural Science, Religious and Moral Education (RME), Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and Physical education (PE). The Upper Primary subjects were Creative Arts, Citizenship Education, English Language, Ghanaian Language, Mathematics, Integrated Science, ICT, RME and PE. The essential contents (broad themes, topics, sub-topics and specific objectives for each lesson) to be taught in each of these subjects is detailed in an approved teaching syllabus for various subjects. As part of the free textbooks policy (one-book-per-child), the specific contents to be taught in lessons are detailed in accompanying textbooks for each subject area.

What this highlights is a curriculum practice where knowledge is pre-determined and forwarded to schools. This occasions reproduction of particular knowledge because it draws the contours between 'sacred' and 'profane' knowledge (Muller & Taylor, 1995; Bernstein, 2000). The sacred knowledge is based on the principle of 'insulation' or standardisation where the delivered curriculum constitutes valid/approved knowledge (Muller & Taylor, 1995). The problem is that insulation does not provide space for 'hybridity' or the co-existence of various knowledges (Dei, 2004). *Insulation* is a curriculum model which presents some knowledge as sacred in that it stresses purity and the dangers of transgression (Muller & Taylor, 1995). It highlights differences between systems of knowledge, and the forms and standards of judgement proper to them. This invalidates other knowledges that are not recognised because the curriculum is very formalised and structured – what should be taught is regulated as it

⁵ Students were expected to read story books during the Library period

is pre-determined (Dei, 2004). Teachers and students do not have the luxury of time and space on the school timetable to exercise personal discretion in exploring other knowledge areas. Teachers become retailers (Smith, 2005) with a responsibility to peddle the formal curriculum (Nayak & Kehily, 2008). This positions teachers as authoritarian transmitters of knowledge that is objectified and fixed (Harber, 2004). But to borrow the words of Nayak and Kehily (2008:80), this “reproduction [of knowledge] becomes the responsibility of individuals [teachers] to the state” as deviations would be “viewed as threats to the social order.” This is because in the social theory of Emile Durkheim, the sacred represents the interest of a group while the profane represents mundane concerns.

In my interactions with teachers, two also raised queries about my research which concerned school curriculum subjects.

You (researchers) are always researching but never questioning the colonial roots of schooling and why education seems to be so irrelevant to our national needs. (Teacher 2, Female)

So what will your research change about our present education system which is still following the colonial system with strong emphasis on only literacy and numeracy and not skill development which we need as a nation; ... note that the colonial people emphasised those aspects because they needed only clerical staff to support their own skilled people. (Teacher 3, Male)

The teacher comments ask fundamental questions not necessarily about research but the curriculum being implemented in school. The questions are about curriculum relevance to national needs. Their attack on the ‘value content’ of the curriculum begs questions of the contents of the prescribed school curriculum. Their argument that the curriculum follows a colonial model suggests perpetration of traces of coloniality in school, and gives face to arguments by anti-colonial theorists that post-colonial education reforms in ex-colonies have not been critical of the bequeathed colonial systems (Adjei, 2007; Dei, 2004; Molteno et al., 2000; Green, 1990). As Dei (2006) argues, all education reforms in Ghana have only built on, rather than critically reviewed of the inherited colonial education system.

Some student comments on the curriculum subjects were:

Sir, we need subjects that help us to know our community! (Student 5, Male)

*Please Sir, some of the subjects are not useful to us. Why can't we learn about agriculture?*⁶ (Student 9, Male)

Why should we learn in English? Why is it that only Fante teacher teach in Fante? (Student 14, Female)

These comments questioning the relevance of the subjects being taught in school highlight concerns characteristic of coloniality of knowledge (Mignolo, 2007), which also suggests that particular knowledges are prescribed while local knowledge is marginalised. This assumes a particular purpose for schooling and therefore a specific notion of relevance – curriculum that addresses local needs such as using indigenous language for instruction. Also, the comments are identical with Adjei's (2007) assessment of colonial education curriculum practice in Ghana, in which he explained that students became disenfranchised and disengaged from the knowledge that is being produced, validated, and disseminated in schools. Time allotted to various subjects on the timetable of the lower primary classes (Primary One to Three) is presented below.

Table 6.1: Number of periods allocated to subjects taught in Lower primary

Subject	Number of Periods per week	Number of Minutes per week	%
Mathematics	10	300	23.2
English Language	11	330	25.5
Natural Science	4	120	9.3
Creative Arts	1	30	2.3
Physical Education	4	120	9.3
Ghanaian Language	3	90	6.9
Information Communication Technology	5	150	11.5
Religious and Moral Education	5	150	11.5
Total	43	1290	100

Source: Field data from School Timetable, November 2011

⁶ Agriculture has been removed from the pre-university school curriculum and replaced with integrated science which combines natural and physical sciences.

The table shows that in each week, 25.4% of all teaching time is allotted to English Language, mathematics (23.2%), ICT (11.5%) and RME (11.5%). Natural Science and Physical Education were each allotted 9.3% of all teaching time. Ghanaian language was allotted three (3) periods representing 6.9% of the teaching time whereas Creative Arts was allotted 2.3%. The following table shows the time allotted to subjects in the upper primary.

Table 6.2: Number of periods allocated to subjects taught in Upper primary

Subject	Number of Periods per week	Number of Minutes per week	%
Mathematics	10	300	23.2
English Language	11	330	25.5
Integrated Science	4	120	9.3
Creative Arts	2	60	4.6
Physical Education	4	120	9.3
Ghanaian Language	4	120	9.3
Citizenship Education	1	30	2.3
Information Communication Technology	5	150	11.5
Religious and Moral Education	2	60	4.6
Total	43	1290	100

Source: Field data from School Timetable, November 2011

The table shows that in each week, 25.5% of all teaching time is allotted to English Language, mathematics (23.2%) and ICT (11.5%). Integrated Science, Physical Education and Ghanaian Language were each allotted 9.3% of all teaching time. Ghanaian language was allotted three (3) periods representing 6.9% of the teaching time. RME and Creative Arts were each allotted 4.6% (30 minutes) of teaching time. Citizenship Education was allotted 30 minutes representing 2.3% of all teaching time.

It is evident that if content coverage is understood as concerned with “the influence of the curriculum on learners’ opportunities to learn” (Mereku et al., 2005:10) then the official school curriculum provides about five times more opportunities (25.5%) for the students to learn about English language, culture and identities than their local

linguistic and cultural identities (6.9%). At the same time, English language is also used as the official language and language of instruction as I discuss more in section 6.2. This suggests, for example that, if language is a carrier of culture and an important component of cultural identity (Fordham, 1998; Bhat, 2008) then the students learn more explicitly about English culture and identities than their native culture in school.

In terms of Creative Arts and Citizenship Education, curriculum provides marginal opportunities. It allots only 4.9% representing 60 minutes out of the 1290 minutes of total teaching time in the upper primary for teaching Creative Arts. The lower primary has less - 30 minutes (2.3%) out of the 1290 minutes of total teaching time. Citizenship Education – a subject focused on learning about the nation and developing citizenship values, attitudes and skills - is not taught at all in the lower primary. And only 30 minutes or 2.3% of total instructional time per week is allotted for Citizenship Education in the Upper Primary Timetable. These would suggest that the basic school curriculum has much less regard for developing creative skills and national consciousness among students. This would suggest that much re-contextualisation (Bernstein, 2000) has not occurred in Ghana's education system. It further lends credence to Reinicke's (1998) argument that developing countries, including Ghana, have national needs (development of national consciousness, citizenship values, national culture and historical identities etc.) side-stepped through the perpetration of colonial school curriculum regimes.

Following from the colonial curriculum model, RME was allotted 11.5% in the lower primary. This indicates that there is more concern for developing the religious, than national consciousness of students. This bespeaks penetration of missionary roots of schooling in Ghana where Christianisation of the natives was a fundamental part of the school curriculum (Graham, 1971; Quartey, 2007). True to the Christian missionary roots, RME was mainly taught and examined along Christian perspectives (see sample of RME examination questions in Appendix 7).

Overall, the discussions in this section highlight arguments that some of the problems of schooling in developing countries of Africa “can be attributed to the dismal failure of the postcolonial state to change the existing system so that it reflects changing times, circumstances and social realities” (Dei 2004:6). The school curriculum remains very traditional or even archaic – reproducing colonial curriculum regimes of privileging some knowledge as the standard curriculum and devaluing local knowledge. These curriculum practices speak back the analysis of the previous chapter that explores the institutional constraints and power positioning – the curriculum is part of this important social and institutional dynamics. As Bernstein (2000) would argue the composition of the delivered curriculum suggests classification/framing of knowledge into esoteric/sacred knowledge and profane/mundane knowledge. The curriculum remained “a field of *production*” where prescribed (esoteric/sacred) knowledge is disseminated (and not constructed), “a field of *reproduction* where the pedagogic practice in schools occurred” but the “*recontextualising field* ... of appropriating discourses from the field of production and transforming them into pedagogic discourse” is omitted (Bernstein, 2000:113). This is evident in the marginalisation of Fante in favour of English language; lesser emphasis on the development of national consciousness and traditional knowledge in favour of ICT, English literacy and numeracy skills. The next section explores the language of instruction and discusses how this problem is further complicated by the prescription of English as medium of instruction.

6.3 English as language of instruction

This section specifically focuses an important aspect of colonial domination - the use of English, foreign language, as the medium of instruction in Ghana. As indicated in Chapter three, British colonialism introduced English language as the official language of instruction. This has persisted since it was introduced in 1852 despite several contestations and research evidence that critique the practice (Graham, 1971; GES, 2001; Anamuah-Mensah, 2002; MOESS, 2004; Mfum-Mensah, 2005; Owu-Ewie, 2006; Seidu et al., 2008).

The students I spoke to complained about the use of English as medium of instruction as indicated in the comments below,

They [teachers] teach in English. Sir, sometimes we don't understand but you cannot ask. ... Only the Fante teacher teach in Fante (Student 6, Female)

Everything is in English. The books are in English ...The teachers teach us in English. They tell you everything in English. Everything is English, English, English... Sir, we only speak Fante when Fante teacher comes to teach (Student 1, Male)

Sir, English is good but if you don't speak good English they will beat you. They will say you don't know anything. Everything is English, everything! We do worship in English, assembly everything... (Student 15, Male)

[Group Interview November 11, 2011]

The comments indicate that every lesson is taught in English; class exercises, assignments and end of term examinations were conducted in English; and teacher student interactions occurred in English. As such, access to linguistic capital (knowledge of the English language) embedded teacher hegemony over students within official classroom discourse. *Fante* (the indigenous language) is subordinated to the advantage of English (the foreign language) as a medium of instruction. The works of postcolonial psychologists such as Derrida (1998), Bhabha (1990) and, Macleod and Bhatia (2008) suggest that doing everything in English reduces indigenous language(s) to literary 'vernacular'. As Fanon and other writers have argued, all these emerges from a fallacy in which the use of English (the language of the historical coloniser) is claimed to be associated with the study of science the acquisition of goods and wealth a whole interconnected system of international benefits that needs to be acknowledged (see Bhabha, 1990; Macleod & Bhatia, 2008). It is this fallacy of associating English language use with scientific knowing and wealth creation that has to be critiqued and undone if the privileges and attributes that set up social hierarchies can be addressed.

However, punishing students for speaking Fante gives expression to anti-colonial criticisms of regimes of linguistic imperialism in which colonised subjects are not treated as people having a language (Painter, 2010). In Fanon's (1967:17) terms, it represented "the amputation of ...[students'] being". Glowacka and Boos (2002) would

refer to punishing students for speaking their indigenous language as the silencing; the erasure of an identity; the cutting of a tongue. So, the poet Ray Gwyn Smith questioned: "Who is to say that robbing a people of its language is less violent than war?" (see Glowacka & Boos, 2002:295). But, it also, speaks of how teachers feel constrained to promote English as legitimate language and Fante as illegitimate language. In this regard it sets "formal prohibitions that in Foucaultian terms produced an 'incitement to discourse'" (Nayak & Kehily, 2008:79). The discourses are many. Besides, the associated cultural damage in which legislating English subordinates Fante, it highlights the view that legislating for a particular language in which reading or writing and teaching must be done in school entrenches power asymmetries where literacy in the chosen language accrues power (Freire, 1972; Collins & Blot, 2003). This further entrenches the overt knowledge/power dynamics and normalises the implicitly gendered relations between teachers and students as well as draws categories among students. It sets up power relations and hierarchies where students are less linguistically and culturally equipped to engage with teachers in classroom discussions. Even if each was trying their best to communicate, students' oral participation in classroom discourse is limited by their fluency in English as their modes of speech do not mesh with those of teachers. This also means that students who have little linguistic capital (scarcely spoke English) were more disadvantaged. Another implication is that students who could read and write better English were at an advantage.

The following are interview comments from teachers concerning the use of English as medium of instruction.

English is an international language so it helps to learn in it. It [English] is not our language but we all have to use it because it is the approved language for teaching. The books are written in English. ... I mean English is everything which is also not very good for our local languages that are 'dying'. But we all have to use it because it is the approved language for teaching (Teacher 3)

Emphasis on English only has 'killed' our languages because we all have a narrow idea that the children need good English to pass BECE. We do everything in English because the final exam questions are set in English. Sometimes you feel students don't get you when you teach but the concepts are in English and you need to teach it that way. We do everything in English

because the final exam questions are set in English. Sometimes you feel students don't get you when you teach but the concepts are in English and you need to teach it that way (Teacher 4).

The problem is that you need the local language sometimes but the books are in English. There are things in the textbooks that you cannot also say in local language. You give it to the children like that. ... because some also think the school is not good if the children cannot speak good English (Teacher 5)

[Discussions with teachers, Thursday August 4, 2011]

These comments work into arguments that educational language choice is neither neutral nor separable from issues of power and access to social and economic advantages (Bourdieu, 1986, 1990). In Bourdieu's (1990) theorisation, the problems expressed in the comments above can be attributed the level of English language 'linguistic capital' that teachers and students have. In Bourdieu's view linguistic capital is a salient aspect of 'cultural capital'; and would refer to fluency, clear understandings of cultural and epistemological codes. The teachers' comments hold the cultural capital thesis in suggesting that possession of English language capital is a standard of measuring 'good' education. In that continuum, good English language skills – fluency, mechanical accuracy and understandings of English cultural and epistemological codes becomes a major goal of schooling. This might be a plausible explanation of why more of the instructional time is allocated to English language learning in the school. One primary concern is that the institutionalisation of English as the medium of instruction endorses the hegemony of English as integral to teaching, learning and examination. The comments highlight that legislation of English Language and its use for textbook writing makes reproduction of its colonial properties a responsibility of the teachers to the state. It highlights the persistence of colonial contradictions - the teachers peddle the official hierarchy where English is regarded as better than Fante. Their concern that emphasis on English through legislation is 'killing' Fante speaks of Anzaldua's (1987:59) point about how people become hurt when their language is denigrated: "So, if you really want to hurt me, talk badly about my language. -- I am my language. Until I can take pride in my language, I cannot take pride in myself..."

The comments of teachers suggest they are compelled to abandon their language, to become agents for denigrating their own language by compelling students to speak in English. The teachers are compelled to use English as language of instruction because the legislation to use English cascaded into a situation where instructional materials are written in English. Writing from the African context, Painter (2010) argued that legislating language of instruction in Africa dates from the colonial encounter when languages were reduced to writing by missionary linguists. The languages familiar to the colonizer were legislated for instruction and indigenous African languages were subordinated. In this regard, said Painter (2010:120), the language of the colonizer “became foundations upon which the ideological edifice of ethnicity and race were erected and thus the instruments whereby forms of indirect rule and practices of segregation were accomplished.” Of relevance to Ghana, Glowacka and Boos (2002:295) described “English language as colonizer: stealer of dreams, swallower of identities”. Fanon (1967:479) discussed it as part of the violence of the colonial encounter - “the colonial moment of epistemic, cultural ... violence” which separated people from their language, a central constituent of their personality, being and sociocultural identities.

But a female teacher (Teacher 2) equally commented,

Sir, there are some things you cannot explain in English yourself...So sometimes you just switch the band to local.

This comment indicates that some teachers occasionally code-switched (switched from English to use Fante language) when they felt that it was convenient. As the comment suggests, teachers did so when they encountered difficulty with explaining concepts in English or at morning assembly as exemplified Chapter Five. This equally raises questions because students’ comments explained earlier indicate they were not allowed to code-switch. The authority to code-switch was also framed to maintain classroom power relations because teachers could code-switch. In one instance I observed students’ code-switching in the classroom happened with the permission of the teacher. On that occasion, the teacher asked, *who knows how we call moon in*

Fante? The students answered in Fante, *Boosom*. In later interviews a female student (Student 10) stated:

Sir, some teachers are antibui⁷, they cannot speak Fante.

The student's comments meant that some teachers could not speak, read or write in Fante. The point is that those teachers could not code-switch even if they as well as students had a problem with explaining some concepts in English. Students in those classrooms experienced English-only instructions; probably the reason why some teachers indicated they teach the subject content verbatim. One possible explanation, from my experience as a basic school teacher, is that teacher deployment policies in Ghana do not consider teachers' linguistic background, probably on the basis that English is the medium of instruction. So, some teachers are posted to schools without reference to their mother tongue.

The main point, however, is that the teacher and students comments suggest the persistence of language of instruction choice. In Ghana, this dates from the Education Ordinance of 1852, which legislated the use of English (foreign language) as the language of instruction (GES, 2001). The reproduction of the colonial curriculum regime on using English as the medium of instruction is producing epistemic effects where Ghanaian languages are disregarded (see Graham, 1971; Mfum-Mensah, 2005; Owu-Ewie, 2006; Seidu et al., 2008). This regime accedes false status to indigeneity because indigenous language carries its own culture with associated knowledges and identities, which are de-privileged, negated and devalued if learning and instructional materials (textbooks) were available only in English language. There is not a dearth of knowledge that language is both a creator and a carrier of cultural epistemological codes, a meaning-constituting system embodied in discourses and text, and identities are structured by the slipperiness and instability of language (see for example Bamgbose et al., 1995; Glowacka & Boos, 2002; Hall, 2008; Bhat, 2008; Painter, 2010). Bhat (2008) discussed language as a great force of socialisation, integrated component of culture, symbol of social and cultural identity, a mode of communication

⁷ Fante expression that describes persons who do not understand an iota of a language

and representation that has a deep connection to the thought and culture of the people who speak them and every language divides up the world into different cultures. Culture does not exist apart from language and linguistic constructions at all levels of grammar and discourse are crucial indicators of identities for members as they regularly interact with one another (Ochs, 1993). Therefore, as Johnson (2000) argued, to impose a language is to radically remove a significant and powerful dimension of personal and social existence.

It is my contention that the way English is employed as a medium of instruction has limited spaces for students to think through concepts in their own language, to develop their linguistic vocabulary and personality as well as knowledge of their cultural and sociolinguistic identities. English-only instructions have denied opportunities for students to participate in official school discourse as active classroom members. Fluency in English and English literacy tended to strongly define the standards for determining the 'good' students. It is "intimately related to power" because, it "constitutes the way teachers and students define, mediate and understand their relations to each other and the larger society" (Giroux, 1988:135). Ultimately, legislating English language constitutes *erasure* (Irvin & Gal, 2000:38) where students and their sociolinguistic existence are rendered invisible in the curriculum through what Bhat (2008:2) explained as a "logical and structural dominance of ... the standard [English language] over the non-standard [Fante language]". In the next section, I explore teacher-student classroom interactions and how these are grounded in the use of English and implementation of the prescribed curriculum.

6.4 Classroom Teaching and Learning Practices

This section continues analysis of the delivered curriculum by exploring student perspectives on how teaching and learning takes place in classroom. Previous studies on classroom practices suggest students have little opportunity in the classroom to engage in activities that will enable them to use concepts, solve non-routine problems and reason systematically (Anamuah-Mensah et al., 2004; Mullis et al., 2004). Such analysis reported distant teacher-student relations and "very poor, students' experience

at school” because of rote practice and teaching as telling (Dunne et al., 2005a; Mereku et al., 2005:7).

In the school I observed, students commented on the modes of teaching used by teachers as follows,

... teachers only come and talk and go. The teachers don't use any practical example but you cannot say I don't understand because they will say you don't pay attention in class. (Student 5, Male)

We don't do any group work! We only sit in this class and listen to the teacher but cannot ask any question. The teachers only come and talk and explain things and go away (Student 10, Female)

school is not interesting because we don't learn, the teachers tell you everything whether you understand or not. (Student 1, Male)

How can you understand the lesson when the teacher only comes and talk to you like he is telling you a story? If you say you don't understand he will cane you or insult you. Sir, whether you understand or not you keep quiet or say, 'Yes I do' as if you are at wedding where you have already made up your mind. You must follow what the teacher is saying. You cannot ask question (Student 3, Male).

The student concerns suggests epistemological gap, between their preferred ways of learning and those of teachers, in the interactional pedagogic relations (Bernstein, 2000:12). Teachers mainly use teacher-led delivery model – which promotes a binary model of teachers as *givers of knowledge* and *students as recipients* (Harber, 2004). Students were reduced to mere listeners and consumers of packaged knowledge (Agbenyega & Klibthong, 2011). In Freire's (1978) terms, the pedagogic relation between students and teachers is one in which teachers talk and the students listen. In Foucault's (1995) terms, there is a hierarchical binary where something the teacher knows is transferred to the student. This suggests that the pedagogic relations between teachers and students did not facilitate co-construction of knowledge.

The following comments represent further student comments on classroom teaching practices.

...our duty is learning and teachers' duty is to teach. I think the teachers know what we do not know. They teach and we listen (Student 11, Male)

You cannot disagree with the teachers because they say they know more than you (Student 8, Female)

The teachers know what is good for us. ... They know what we must learn and they teach us (Student 7, Male Prefect)

Teachers don't involve us in lessons... they only talk to us and we do exercise sometimes (Student 15, Male)

[Group Interview with students]

These comments further suggest teaching is “couched in authoritarian terms” (Pryor & Ampiah, 2003:40). The students conceptualised *teachers* as both repositories of knowledge and authoritarian transmitters of knowledge. From Bernstein's (2000) perspective, the student statements depict a performance mode of knowledge production that denies pedagogic rights of active participation to students. In concomitance with the delivered curriculum, what constitutes curriculum knowledge interacts with teacher and student positioning. The notion of a ‘teacher’ becomes associated with transmission of knowledge and hierarchical position in relation to students who are positioned as *learners* or recipients. This is characteristic of the colonial model of reproducing knowledge where the school curriculum becomes a system for the transmission of cognitive knowledge, subject content and values through teacher-centred learning in which knowledge is certain, factual and objective with a view to maintain centre-periphery relations (Green, 1990). This positions the teacher as an authoritarian knowledge transmitter (Harber, 2004). Teachers exercise control over classroom knowledge is a given and students’ are passive subjects in classroom interactions. Teaching approaches used by teachers mostly deny students opportunities to express their views (particularly in disagreement) during knowledge construction.

The following scenarios represent how three different teachers introduced their lessons.

As you know already, we have learnt about ... and so today we want to continue by learning.... (Primary 4)

In our last lesson we learnt about ... so today we are going to learn ... (Primary 6)

How are you? Hope you have not forgotten what we learnt in science on Monday! Today, we want to continue the same lesson; but we will be discussing another sub-topic "heavenly bodies". Since all of you know heaven I want you to tell me one thing, one heavenly body. (Primary 1)

[Classroom lesson observed on Tuesday October 18, 2011]

It may be observed that the teachers introduced the lessons with assumptions about what students knew. This somehow corresponds with earlier student comments which indicate that teachers mainly talk or tell them what to do. Although it is professionally prudent to situate lessons in students' previous knowledge, this is to be explored and the lesson built on it based on the ideas of learning from the known to the unknown. This could be done by using questions to review students' previous knowledge or the previous lesson. However, the lesson introduction by the Primary 1 teacher, for example, proceeded with an assumption that the students know heaven without establishing that fact first.

The scenario below is an example of how the main lessons proceed after introduction.

Teacher: So, we say that living things grow and die. Do you understand?

Students: Y-e-s!

Teacher: Plants and animals are living things because they grow and die. Do you understand?

Students: Y-e-s!

Teacher: *Living things include animals such as goat, sheep, duck, cattle and birds*

Students: Yes Sir!

[Classroom lessons observed on Monday October 31, 2011]

This scenario indicates that students' participation in the lesson was essentially passive and limited to rote learning. As may be observed from the interaction, students' classroom participation was characteristically limited to answering questions in chorus.

This highlights Bernstein's (2000) ideas of a performance mode of knowledge production, Freire's (1993) ideas of prescription and understandings embedded in the coloniality of knowledge (see Mignolo, 2007). Teachers employ teaching methods that perpetuate the pedagogy of the oppressed (Freire, 1993) where students are constructed as people who needed civilisation. Freire argued that such curriculum is colonial because it encourages classroom pedagogic relations that combine a dangerous mixture of crude loyalty and unquestioning obedience to teacher authority where knowledge is reproduced than critiqued.

Two teachers explained their pedagogic relations with students as follows

Before you go to class you must be prepared to explain and explain because we all know the students do not know anything. You don't go there to ask them questions because you will waste your time. You just have to explain the things to them as much as you can. (Teacher 5, Male)

If you want your teaching to be effective, just think carefully and plan how you can explain the content of the lesson to their [students'] understanding. Just go there and prepare to explain everything. (Teacher 6, Female)

Explicit in the teacher comments are expressions of both academic hierarchy and cultural binary that produces relative positioning. They perceive students as 'incompetents' – infantile, ignorant and incapable. Students' verbal/active classroom participation in constructing knowledge was considered as peripheral or irrelevant. This means that teachers' do not consider it is vitally necessary to teach students to engage in co-construction of knowledge and possibly critique existing knowledge (Dei & Shahjahan, 2008). This classroom approach raises issues of knowledge power and identity in classroom discourses. My proposition is that the delivered curriculum occasions, in Bernstein's (2000) terms, a form of classification - a framing of centre-periphery classroom relationship in which students must remain unquestioning, learning one thing at a time. I would argue, the students become passive subjects of teachers' knowledge because teachers have the authority of pre-determined knowledge that learners are yet to acquire. This indicates, as Giroux (2004) would argue, how the prescribed curriculum gives teachers control over knowledge at the micro level of the classroom such that the educational force of the delivered curriculum

negates the basic conditions of critical agency. Students do not question teachers because the fallacy of teachers as all-knowing tends to sustain what Bernstein (2000) called performance modes of knowledge production.

One explanation of the differentials is the persistence of the curriculum positioning of teachers as the civilizers of students. The teachers, presumably, have previous knowledge of the prescribed curriculum, and so, they have knowledge of what students are yet to learn. As such, it is the teacher who determines the 'sacred' knowledge (Bernstein, 2000) to be learnt in the classroom at any given period of time. As Harber (2004) explained, such curriculum practice occasions a colonial mode of reproducing particular knowledges because the teacher cannot be critiqued by students. Like the missionary teachers of the colonial times, they have the 'right' knowledge that the students need. This fits well in the colonial curriculum in Ghana when the 'native' students were constructed as people who need civilisation and the attendant fallacy of the teacher as an educator (Busia, 1964; Graham, 1971).

Other teacher comments were rather interesting.

I don't have a computer; I don't know anything about it but I must teach because I am the class teacher. I take the book and read to them. I describe as it is in the textbook and show them pictures (Teacher 4, Female).

How can you teach ICT without teaching learning materials. Sometimes I do not know what to teach but you just read the book and tell them something because they too don't know (Teacher 3, Male)

[Group Discussion with teachers, November 11, 2011]

These teacher comments suggest that they do not necessarily know everything - they draw on the prescribed curriculum to maintain their authoritarian position over students. Implicitly, their comments are a tacit admission that they employ traditional teacher-centred approaches that require performance modes of learning suggested by Bernstein (2000). It speaks of silencing students' voice in teaching and learning because, knowledge is pre-determined and teachers are positioned as embodiments of this knowledge. It speaks of what Tsai (2000) calls 'epistemological gap' between teachers and students where learner (students') voice is absent from classroom

knowledge construction. The epistemological gap also refers to a “mismatch” (Kinchin, 2004:302), is described by researchers as always having a negative effect on the quality of learning that takes place (see for example, Hughes & Vass, 2001; Schommer-Aikins et al., 2002). The teacher comments here suggest that the mismatch also gives validity to the power relations discussed in Chapter Five because, being a *teacher* means that one has ‘unquestionable’ power and authority on knowledge which students cannot question. As anti-colonialists argue, the role of the teacher is to impart a factual body of knowledge to students who are conceptualised as “immature recipients” needing to be ‘schooled’ (Harber, 2004: 61).

From the teaching and learning practices I would argue that teaching approaches deny students’ pedagogic rights to the means of critical understanding and seeing new possibilities; and the rights of participation and inclusion - the right to be included socially and intellectually in the construction within the school classroom (see McLean & Abbas, 2009 for further discussion of these pedagogic rights). For me, this is conditioned by the prescribed curriculum which casts knowledge as something that is pre-determined and fixed, and so, encourages performance modes of knowledge production. The delivered curriculum becomes “the material medica of pedagogy, the pharmacopeia”, exemplifying particular contents that teachers must teach and students must learn (Shulman, 2004: 204). The implication is that the public pedagogy behind the prescribed curriculum becomes constraining to all at the school level. This also lends credence to Smith’s (2005:16) argument describing school as “the country town” becomes “a retail trading station” where teachers are peddlers of the ‘sacred’ knowledge prescribed in the national syllabus and government approved textbooks. As Bernstein (2000) suggests, the incumbency on teachers to meet the demands of educating students according to standard curriculum knowledge creates a criterion or a moral discourse, which occasions authoritarian stress on the transmission of cognitive knowledge and subject content. Harber (2004) argues that the authoritarian stress on transmission of the prescribed knowledge subordinates education about practical skills, cultural and national identity, feelings and relationships because its aim is to the reproduction of cognitive knowledge.

I would argue that the delivery modes of teaching employed by teachers position “children as colonized bodies” (Agbenyega & Klibthong, 2011:406) in the classroom and justify their curriculum invisibility as passive recipients of knowledge from teachers who deliver the prescribed knowledge or what Bernstein would call exoteric knowledge outlined in the syllabus and government approved textbooks to students. In that regard, the knowledge students bring from the home to the school is students is treated as ‘street wisdom’ or ‘profane’ knowledge which has no place in the school curriculum. This hierarchy of knowledge gives an ideological legitimation to the hierarchical constructions of the school as earlier discussed in Chapter Five. It, also, gives legitimacy to the legislation of English Language as the medium of instruction as discussed in Section 6.4 of this Chapter. As I argued, English language is the language of the colonizer which was employed to promote certain forms of knowing and ideological supremacy (see Fanon, 1967). When teachers employ English as medium of instruction, they are employing the language of the colonizer, and with this comes colonising attitudes - to present indigeneity and local knowledge as less useful and the colonial subject as less knowledgeable and needing to be ‘schooled’ to the standards of the civilization. In the next section I explore assessment of learning based on the delivered curriculum, which I further argue, cyclically promotes the reproduction of knowledge.

6.5 Assessment of learning

This section continues the analysis of the reproduction of knowledge by exploring the allied way in which learning is organised and tested.

In the research school, I had an interesting encounter with a female over-age student [Student 17] who was often teaching KG students. When I asked why, she narrated:

It is Madam⁸ [headteacher] who said that, I should teach the KG class if their teachers are not in school. I must make sure they don't disturb. ... If I refuse to go when the teacher is not there, Madam will cane me. But they say I don't

⁸ The students use this term as a generic name for female teachers in the school.

know anything and always they repeat me... But me too I like the KG class because when our teacher is not around I can play with them.

Different points can be highlighted from the student's comments. In Ghanaian terms, the comment, *they always repeat me*, means that the student has to attend one grade level more than once because her academic performance is not satisfactory to teachers. These highlight undertones of how teachers draw on the prescribed curriculum as a measure of academic competency to seriate and position students (Lave & Wenger, 1991). One is age-related positioning where the overage student is being used as classroom assistant to control - to maintain quiet - in KG classes where the students are relatively far younger. I discuss this age-power relations more in Chapter Seven. This points to the exercise of teacher authority in terms of degree of freedom the student has to choose what she is allowed to do in school. In this sense the delivered curriculum becomes both performance measuring tool and a type of Bernstein's (2000) corporeal device for bodily regulation. When I asked the KG teacher (Teacher 6) about this student, she laughed and responded:

Oh, she has repeated Class Three two times already. She should have been in P5 now but she is still in P3 because she is always failing exams. ... She teaches songs to the KG students when we are not around but I don't know what we can do now.

The comments highlight that the incumbency on teachers to educate students according to prescribed national curriculum standards tends to accrue power to teachers to determine who progresses from one grade level (classroom) to another. The description of the student as 'failing exams' suggests that teachers rely on the prescribed curriculum to create a standard of measurement that creates what Foucault (1977:182) calls "a space of differentiation" that ascribes academic identities of being *failures* or *incompetents* and *the successful* or *academically competent* (see Salisbury & Jackson, 1996; Colvin & Schlosser, 1997; Apple, 2006; Moore et al., 2007 for further discussion on these academic identities). The comments suggest, as Colvin and Schlosser (1997) argued, that being an 'academic failure' makes teachers position the student as an educational outsider - unsuccessful learner who does not belong in academic settings. She is kept in the school and made to repeat classes because she

cannot make the grade requirements necessary to progress to higher grade levels. So, the graduated school classrooms from KG to Primary Six which is based on academic progression also signifies academic performance and becomes “a physical divide of segregation and exclusion that distances the Other from the Same” (Elden, 2001:94-45). This is particularly problematic when understood in the context of the perplexing teacher comment, which suggests that teachers have ‘run out’ of ideas on what interventions may be available to support this student. This poses a threat to achieving EFA and questions the developmental possibilities of schooling because, an overage student who spends more years in school without making progress may eventually drop out – which is a main threat to achieving UPC.

Other teacher comments on repetition of students are the following.

We repeated some three students in Primary Six for three years. Now one has dropped because she cannot continue repeating but the JHS head [headteacher] says he cannot accept them because the District People (District Education Officials) accuse them [headteachers] of non-performance if they accept children who are not academically good and they fail the final exams. (Teacher 5, Male)

Some of the students are not [academically] good so we repeat them because if they progress to the next class they cannot do anything. It is in their interest to be repeated because, for example, I wonder how the students in my class who don't know how to read P.4 [Primary Class 4] books can read Class Five books if we promote them. If you cannot solve simple addition and subtraction in P3 how can you be promoted to Primary Four? ... (Teacher 4, Female)

[Group Discussion with teachers, November 11, 2011]

The teacher comments indicate they distinguish the academically good students from repeaters through objective examination of academic performance. In the research school, teachers mark student exercises and assign comments such as “very poor”, “poor”, “good”, “very good” and “excellent”. Thus school assessment produces normalising judgement (Foucault 1977:182) which falsely justifies the exclusion of some students as ‘failures’ and negates educational opportunities for them (Harber, 2004). These emphasise individual achievement, give semblance of competition and provide avenues for differentiation between the academically ‘good’ student and the academic ‘incompetents’. I would argue that this examination-based academic seriation of students (Piro, 2008) are consequences of the performance mode of schooling

where a set of fixed knowledge is reproduced through prescribed curriculum. The implications for society are broad.

First, such curriculum practice produce hierarchies of knowledge and suggests fixity that negates the wealth of local knowledge that students bring to school as what Giddens (1997) described as 'street wisdom'. As Giddens (1997: 418) argued, teachers do not regard students' traditional knowledge as "skilful and complex a set of abilities as any of the intellectual skills taught in school". This resonates with anti-colonial criticisms that prescribed school curriculum mostly undermines indigenous knowledge (Dei, 2004). This does not mean opposition to developing curriculum standards, but a critique of its narrow use as an instrument of differentiation and measure of competency that ascribes the characteristics of being 'failures' to some students, which implies limited possibility to progress and complete school. In Bernstein's (2000) terms, it creates a criterion that gives access to hierarchies that position teachers over students and further ranks some students as 'better' than others. This is because the prescribed curriculum also serves as a guide to effective assessment of student achievement level. The point is that assessment takes the form of examination which positions academic success as the available door into personal and national development, which directly negates EFA propositions (Said, 1978; Esteva, 2004; Mignolo, 2004). In terms of identities, it ascribes feelings such as being *arrogant* to the academically excellent and embarrassment to the '*failures*'. As Salisbury & Jackson (1996) argued, this can reproduce *anti-social* behaviour in the form of *truancy* and *disruptiveness* which in Harber's (2004) view points to the role of schools in reproducing social violence.

6.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed how curriculum subjects in school constitute legitimated knowledge, which teachers transmit to students. Like a colonial curriculum, it places more emphasis on knowledge as objectified and mostly fixed. It positions teachers as carriers of traditions of knowledge and authoritarian transmitters of packaged knowledge. The consequent 'curriculum invisibility' and classroom relations position students as 'colonial subjects' – people without a language; people without

‘valid’ knowledge; and passive recipients of ‘sacred’ or esoteric knowledge they need to become ‘civilized’. In order to assess their levels of ‘enlightenment’ students’ learning is assessed on the basis contents of the prescribed curriculum. Consistent with colonial denigration of indigenous languages, English is used as the language of instruction in ways that subordinate Fante (the indigenous language of the school’s community). All these give face to the critique that, despite the attainment of political independence, Ghana’s school system is still dominated by colonial canon, worldview, and epistemology (Adjei, 2007). In the next Chapter, I explore the identities students develop and how they navigate the existential regimes – the relational practices discussed - in this chapter, and in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER SEVEN

STUDENT IDENTITIES AND NEGOTIATION STRATEGIES

7.1 Introduction

This chapter reflects my thinking about students' in-school identities. It draws on interview data to explore further the overt disciplinary systems and structures addressed in Chapter Five, and the knowledge production processes considered in Chapter Six. This chapter continues the analysis by exploring how students perceived their positioning in school.

Methodologically, I draw on social constructionism (e.g. Freire, 1993; Foucault, 1995; du Gay, 2007) and discourse and conversation analysis (Fowler et al., 1979; Fairclough & Woodak, 1997; Schiffrin et al., 2001; MacLure et al., 2012) to make sense of 'who' students become in school and how they negotiate their identities. The three sections focus on students' accounts of the hidden curriculum. The first section specifically discusses student identities. The second explores why they stay in school despite their regulation and the third focuses on their negotiation strategies.

7.2 Student identities

The section presents analysis of how the students "recognise themselves in their difference" (MacLure et al., 2012:457). In doing so, I draw from the works of spatial thinkers, particularly gender scholars, who argue that identities are brought into being through their performance (Butler, 1990, 2000; Massey, 2005; Hubbard et al., 2010).

The material is organised under two sub-themes. The first theme discusses students' collective perspective on themselves as '*being nobodies*' relative to the positioning of teachers as both agential and authority figures. The second theme disentangles how the collective identities of '*being nobodies*' goes beyond a notion of the homogenised student to explore different gender categories as juniors, seniors, prefects, and others, which were entry points for expressing power among students (Dunne, 2009).

7.2.1 We are 'nobodies'

This section discusses students' collective perspective of themselves as '*being nobodies*' (powerless members of the school). In my initial interactions with students, Student 1 asked me the following set of questions, which got me thinking about student identities. The question was,

Sir, do you also think or do you see us as children? Or do you think that we do not know anything? ... because they [teachers] call us children they think we don't know anything.

My understanding of the student comments is a concern that, in school, they are positioned as children which "requires the embodiment and subordinated performance of a 'child' identity especially in relation to their teachers" (Dunne & Ananga, 2013:202). Superficially, the comments signify age relations as an important element of how students are positioned within the institution. It suggests that aside from the formal institutional controls discussed in Chapters Five and Six, "age is an important signifier of power and authority" (Dunne & Ananga, 2013:198) as well as knowledge in the school. Other student comments were informative, however.

*Sir, if you come to school the teacher can even slap you. Nobody will say anything. **We are nobodies**....* (Student 4, Female)

*Sir, **we are nobodies** because the teachers can cane you anytime or do anything to you. ...* (Student 13, Male)

*In this school, **the students don't matter**... even the prefects... that teachers select themselves. The teachers know what they want, they tell us and we do it* (Student 11, Male)

[Group interview, Monday November 13, 2011]

The comments seemed deeply rooted in how students positioned themselves in relation to controls as discussed in Chapters Five and Six. The comments suggest that power relations in the school are fixed such that the circuits of social categories between teachers and students work at the school level to produce characteristics that control students. They do not see themselves as what Addler and Adler (1998) described as *complete* members of the school because they see teachers as authority figures who cannot be questioned. The comments, *we are nobodies*, particularly suggest how students including prefects perceived themselves as what Agbenyega

and Klibthong (2011:406) call 'colonized bodies'. It bespeaks undertones of a deep and tragic sense of powerlessness indicating Miller's (1990) ideas of a poisonous pedagogic relationship between teachers and students, which limited possibilities for democratic engagement. The comment, *the students don't matter*, suggests that aside from teacher authority to physical violate students with impunity, the identity of *being nobodies* is produced in relation to the marginalisation of students' views on school administration. It suggests that students are not involved in decision making and are largely doers of what teachers tell them. The comments to the effect that teachers can do anything including physical abuse such as slapping students highlights power relations which can be essentialized into violent 'masculine' authoritarianism connoted in being a teacher and 'feminine' submissiveness of being student. This connects to anti-colonial arguments that schooling has characteristics that can make students become docile subjects or colonized bodies (Foucault, 1995).

The following are further student comments on their positioning within school.

*The teachers think **we don't know anything**. I know I will become somebody one day when I complete school.* (Student 14, Female)

*When the seniors write your name the teachers can do anything to you because they are teachers. ... **we are nobodies** because they [teachers] know more than us... But I will also become somebody too...* (Student 13, Male)

[Group interview, Monday November 13, 2011]

These comments further highlight the students' self-positioning as being 'nobodies'. As they explicitly stated, they perceived themselves as people who do not know anything and that they will become somebodies only after they complete school. The idea that they do not know anything suggests how they internalised their positioning relative to the esoteric/sacred knowledge that is transmitted in school. This distancing may be the reason they argued, as discussed in Chapter Five, that the curriculum knowledge is not relevant. The comments of Student 13 above suggest that students position teachers as somebodies and themselves as being 'nobodies'. A careful look at the comments would suggest that the students' subordination of students to teacher authoritarianism in knowledge production, as discussed in Chapter Six, is constructed in relation to the

esoteric knowledge prescribed in delivered curriculum where teachers are positioned as carriers of traditions of knowledge. The recurrent phrase - *the teachers think* – recalls Bernstein's (2000) arguments that student identities, (of *being nobodies* in the case of this research) is introjected pedagogic discourse. As Bernstein (1990) suggests the pedagogic discourse has two significant aspects: the first is the differential effects of what is relayed, the content of pedagogic discourse and its differential effects on learners. The second, is a 'double distortion' in communication which involves a privileging of the principles of order and relation, and of specific content associated with dominant social groups as well as how formal schooling practices promote cultural practices of the dominant group. This highlights anti-colonial arguments that school practices structure "information, knowledge, belief and value systems [to] create dominating meaning" (Agbenyega & Deku, 2011:5).

The following quotes were some student expressions when we discussed their classroom social relations.

We are not allowed to talk in the classroom. But it is impossible for a human being to be among a group of people in the same class for the whole day and not talk ... How can it be possible that people will be in class and not talk at all? Me, Sir, I am only here in this school because my mother will not allow me to stop school now. But these rules are just bad! (Student 1, Male)

I think even prisoners are allowed to talk in prison. Why can't we talk in school? ... Then how do you learn from other people? (Student 12, Female)

They [teachers] see us [students] as little children. But little children also talk. Even they talk than adults. So why can't we talk? Does it mean that when you come to school then you are no longer a human being or what? (Student 11, Male)

[Group interview with students, Monday August 12, 2011]

These student perspectives ordinarily illustrate limitations on talk, and highlight transgressions of sex-gender dichotomies (Dunne et al., 2005a). As the comments suggests, students could not challenge the authority of teachers (both male and female). Although Nayak and Kehily (2008) and Dunne et al (2005a) argued that female teacher authority in particular can frequently be contested by male students, the

comments suggest that teacher-student hierarchy takes precedence over male-female gender relations. Student masculinities are subordinate to the masculine teacher authority established through the school hierarchy discussed in Chapter Five. What we can learn is that social classifications of teachers and students are social positions emanating from what Skeggs (2004:1) described as “an amalgam of features of a culture ... generated through systems of inscription.” I would argue that the systems of inscription that subvert male-female power asymmetries are the hierarchical organisation in school policy which I discussed in Chapter Five. Also, I would argue with Skeggs that these hierarchies are read onto bodies both to validate and entrench teacher control over students.

Another aspect of the limitation on talk in the students comment re-echoes Foucault’s (1977:11) critique that, in school, the students’ body is “caught up in a system of constraints ... obligations and prohibitions”. As Foucault argued, that act of silencing is an intervention on the student’s body intended “to imprison it, to make it work, it is in order to deprive the individual of a liberty that is regarded both as a right and as a property”. However, as the students suggested their situation is far worse than imprisonment. It is dehumanisation which implies denial of basic rights to speech, of social interaction (freedom of association), and freedom of movement. As discussed in Chapter Six, this dehumanisation illustrates the persistence of “an insignia for colonial authority and a signifier of colonial desire and discipline” (Bhadha, 2004:146) which includes silencing of a people; the erasure of an identity; the cutting of a tongue (Glowacka & Boos, 2002).

The prefects, as intermediaries in teacher-student hierarchies made very interesting remarks as in the following quotes.

*If you come to school, **you know you are nobody** because the teachers do anything to you* (Student 9, Male Prefect)

*Sir, I am a prefect, but **I don’t think the teachers believe I know anything**. So, you say yes to everything the teachers say. If you disagree, they will cane you* (Student 10, Female Prefect)

*They say, I am the senior prefect but **I cannot say anything**... they will not listen to you. You must do what they want you to do. Who are you to tell them, we are nobodies to the teachers... We just do what they say* (Student 7, Male Prefect)

[Group interview with Prefects, Monday November 13, 2011]

The comments flatten the apparent differences between prefects and the non-prefects. The prefects also see themselves as *being nobodies*, which highlights anti-colonial understandings of collective identities of colonised groups (Dei, 2004; Rizvi et al., 2006). Viewing their comments from Foucault's (1977) perspective suggests that their bodies are also caught up in constraints, obligations and prohibitions. Whereas I am not arguing that students represent a homogenous group constrained without division, their collective self-perception as *being nobodies*, draws our attention to class culture in school. It speaks to the way in which state legislation and school policy, textbooks and classroom teaching practices set up school hierarchies that become regulatory technologies that position students as 'colonized subjects'. By colonized subjects, I mean people who are not regarded as full human beings and denied rights of participation as full members of the institution (see research by Handy, 1984 for further discussions on how children are not seen as fully human in school). The denial of rights includes the students' 'curriculum invisibility' and the 'inability' to challenge their physical violation in school. It indicates the positioning of students as passive recipients of imposed knowledge and their powerlessness to speak back to the relations of domination into which they have become inserted in school.

My proposition is the student identities as *being nobodies* suggest that their school days are not the 'happiest' days (Wood, 1990). The students' identities of *being nobodies* illustrate the impact of the school regimes discussed in Chapter Five and Chapter Six. It is not a simple matter about the impact of traditional adult-child relations or teacher domination in school. It reflects how students make sense of practices that retain colonial modes of regulation; of discipline; of marginalising their knowledge and their language; and, the delivery/performance modes of knowledge production which position them as passive recipients of pre-determined. Despite their collective identities of being nobodies, it will be foolhardy to suggest that these students are one and the

same. It will be equally inconceivable to suggest that all students experience the same regulation in the same or similar ways. Heterogeneity and diversity are facts of human life and existence. In the following section, I discuss how the identities of *being nobodies* operate across different spatial scales and bodies.

7.2.2 Different ‘nobodies’

In this section, I focus on how different groups of students experience the identities of *being nobodies* in school. It will be pretentious to assume that the ‘list’ of identities categories discussed in this section is exhaustive, particularly as I understand identities from social constructionist perspective as doings, being and being with (see Butler, 1990; Nancy, 2000; du Gay, 2007).

Seniors and Juniors

This section focuses on class-authority-based social relations, which produces the idea of seniors and juniors following from classroom gradations – sequential organisation of classrooms - that reflect the linear progression students are expected to follow from enrolment in KG 1 to completion (P6). The classrooms in which students were placed identified the number of years spent in school and the quantum of curriculum knowledge acquired. This is consistent with school hierarchies that place teachers with more curriculum knowledge and English proficiency and age in the superior position.

The physical boundaries established by the placement of students in classrooms represented a linear progression from one stage to the other. This gave expression to the identities of some students being *seniors*, which in turn produces the counter identities of others being *juniors*. As noted in Chapter Five the *seniors* were mainly students in Primary Six (P6). All prefects (except class prefects) were selected from Primary Six. Students in the lower classes were referred to as *juniors* because they spent fewer numbers of years in school.

The following are student comments on the identities of being juniors and students.

Sir, the seniors go round during the silence period. They help the prefects to write names so that teachers can cane you... Sometimes they will say

something and if you talk they say you are challenging the seniors then the teachers will cane you. (Student 15, Male)

The senior-on-duty will say 'do before you complain'. Sometimes at Assembly in the morning they will say you are not dressed properly...They can say your haircut is not good. (Student 1, Male)

The juniors sometimes complain about us but we are also doing what we have to do... If you are senior-on-duty and you don't write names they will cane you. They are our friends but the school has rules that we all follow. ... We don't respect age ... Whether you are boy or girl, young or old we must ensure you keep school rules. (Student 4, Female)

Sir, the seniors are always right. The teachers will cane you if the senior punish you and you don't do it. ... Sir, the seniors and the prefects are the same. They are always watching you for the teachers. They will say you did not do this or that. (Student 6, Female)

[Group interview, Monday November 13, 2011]

These comments epitomise how school hierarchy tends to reproduce power relations in student peer relations. It speaks of Foucault's (1995) suggestion that institutional power works into a variety of discourses that makes it possible to map people and to bring the effects of power to them. The *juniors'* (students 15, 1 and 6) comments indicate that the *seniors* served as teacher's agents and exercise unchallengeable authority suggests. This speaks of Giddens' (1990) point about the role of schools reproducing social categories and inequalities that allocate power resources to some against others. However, as discussed in Chapter Five, the unchallengeable authority of *seniors* implies that they are positioned as sub-oppressors (Freire, 1993). The ideas that the *senior* is always right and cannot be challenged implied that the *juniors* are always required to submit to *seniors*. The *seniors* regulate the *juniors* to 'act right' in order to 'pass' as members of school. The *seniors* determine 'proper boys' and the 'proper girls' by helping to ensure compliance with school rules.

Alternatively, the *senior's* comments suggesting that they monitor the observance of school rules highlights Freire's (1993) notion of how prescription in colonial relations transform the sub-oppressor's consciousness to the prescriber's consciousness. As Freire suggests, the senior's comments highlight that she (and her colleagues) have developed an attitude of adhesion to school rules. In terms of gender, the comments

suggest that female *seniors* also exercise authority over *juniors* (both males and females). A similar reversal of gender stereotypes has been documented in other studies (Ogbay, 1999; Dunne et al., 2005; Nayak & Kehily, 2008). It may also be argued, that the *seniors* have stayed in the school longer, and so, have internalised and become accustomed to the school rules. As such, they could exercise the “choreographic power of masculinity” (Nayak & Kehily, 2012: 177) to implore *juniors* to behave in accordance with school rules.

It may be argued that the identities of *being nobodies* are felt more by the *juniors* (students in the lower classes) than *seniors* those in the upper classes. Juniors could not become seniors-on-duty or school prefects. They could not write the names of students in upper classes to be punished. As *juniors*, they were regulated by the *seniors* and teachers to act as ‘proper’ school children, which implied that they are subjects of uninterrupted monitoring. Seniors, however, are coerced differently. The comments of Student 4 echoes the discussions in Chapter five that the *seniors* were mainly constrained actors, because, they were punished if they failed to produce names of *juniors* who flout school rules. This regulation suggests that we cannot argue, necessarily, that seniors were less controlled. As discussed in Chapter Five, *seniors* are considered as ‘grown-ups’, and so, they received more lashes during caning than *juniors*. So, the point that can be made is that the identities of *being nobodies* applies to both *juniors* and *seniors*, variously although juniors will argue that it is more acute for them. In that continuum, it can also be argued that the way school policy requires teachers to use *seniors* as agents creates division among students and positions them against each other in ways that generate tensions in their peer-to-peer relationships. This does not mean that the students are only grouped into *juniors* and *seniors*. In the following, I discuss how the identities of being nobodies is complicated for prefects, the over-age, disabled, female and religious ‘others’.

Being a prefect

In this subsection, I looked more closely at how the student identities of *being nobodies* applied to prefects. The discussions in Chapter Five (see 5.2) suggested that the characteristics of being ‘good’ students, intelligent and respectful were, typically,

ascribed to prefects. *Being a prefect* was synonymous with possession of linguistic capital (of being fluent in English), academic achievement and respect for authority. It implied becoming part of the institutional apparatuses in the service of teachers to monitor the conduct of non-prefect students and to exercise power over them.

A female prefect (Student 10) explained what it means to be a prefect,

I must always write names because I don't want to be caned. I tell my friends to help me write the names so that I can always get someone... because the teachers will not understand if you say 'no one made noise'. Hmmm, he will beat you yourself. So you have to write names whether you like it or not!

Thus being prefect ascribes the role of *monitor*: constantly monitoring deviations from expected or normal behaviour among students and reporting culprits to teachers. The comments suggested prefects actually needed to 'hunt' for colleagues who would be punished. Prefects become what Talbot (1998: 157) described as "constrained actors" because they either did what teachers asked them to do or were performing to meet teachers' expectations. A male prefect (Student 9) explained,

It is not good to become a prefect because your friend will not walk with you again. Sir, even your brothers sometimes don't like you because you write their names for teachers to cane. ... if you become a prefect, you must write names of people who talk in class. You must write names of latecomers. You must give numbers during silent period and give to teachers so that they can cane them... Sir, you must help teachers to keep discipline... the teachers will cane you if don't report someone! The only thing you can tell them is that this student is late or talking... nothing! (Group interview with Prefects, Monday, August 1, 2011)

The comments above also imply that being prefect connotes becoming the 'surveillance eye' of teachers. In Foucault's terms, the prefects are the panopticon through which teacher ensure that that self-discipline is always present among students. Prefects are constrained to keep performing this task even when it means breaking friendship patterns (pre-school family ties and friendships). They become positioned by their peers (non-prefects) as teachers' agents. The more effective prefects were in their role (which implies pleasing teachers), the more they become isolated among their peers. The implication is that the *prefects* were neither *teachers*

nor belong among *students*, which reinforces the distinction between teachers and students. This point of prefects recording names or working as teacher's agents, and their colleagues isolating them in retaliation, speaks of Uzzell's (2005) argument, that doings in school establish power zones that make enemies out of people who would otherwise have been friends. I would suggest that it highlights the role of schools in cultivating social violence by drawing violent contours in society through a culture of divisiveness among people who will have bonded together.

Another male prefect (Student 7) stated

... if you become a prefect, the teachers will send you. They will send you to buy food or anything. Even if your teacher is teaching they will come and call you to do this or that for them because they say you are respectful. You cannot say no, never! You must do what they teachers say. Your friends will not like you but you have to do it because you don't want the teachers to cane you. It is not the best. (Group interview with Prefects, Monday, August 1, 2011)

These comments and other prefect comments already discussed in Chapter Five suggest that prefects were constrained by the disciplinary requirements of schools to constantly monitor and report non-prefects at great personal and social risks including breaking family ties. As such, prefects cannot be simply constructed as positional figures who exercise power over non-prefects. They see themselves as being 'nobodies' who cannot say 'No' to anything. One argument can be that, 'respectful' students who become prefects are, actually, those who were afraid of teacher victimisation and have adopted an attitude of adhesion to teachers (Freire, 1993). They become conformists in order to avoid abuse by teachers. They are not simply sub-oppressors. Given that the prefects have concerns about their functions but felt constrained by the regulatory requirements of school to perform such functions, suggests that their bodies are also caught up in the system of constraints in school.

Being Over-age

In this sub-section, I present an organised discussion on how the student identities of being 'nobodies' are performed with references to age-authority based relations. Although age is not tacitly acknowledged in the official school hierarchy, it seems to be part of the structure that offers authority. Dunne and Ananga (2013:198) have

discussed age as “a key organisational structure around which students are arranged in classes and through which the authority of teachers is institutionally sanctioned.” They assert that age “has an important bearing on relations between teachers and students as well as between students, which is especially pertinent in Ghana where there are many ‘over-age’ students in schools.” In my discussions with teachers, age came up as a frame of reference which I explored with students to understand its implications for the students’ identities of *being nobodies*.

The teacher comments that has salience for age were:

We don't cane all the children. Some of them are grown-ups so we rather advise them. (Teacher 4, Female)

We think it will be humiliating or disgraceful to cane them in front of the younger ones. We give them counselling because, they may even hurt you if you are not careful in dealing with them. (Teacher 3, Male)

These comments provide insights into how over-age students get-on in relation to the student identities of being nobodies. They bespeak of age relations as important indices in institutional relations as teachers are somewhat ‘afraid’ to touch the over-age students whom they think may attack them in the community after school. The immediate assumption in the teacher comments is that over-age students are not, necessarily, ‘nobodies’. First, the over-age students were positioned as *grown-ups* who should not be humiliated or disgraced. The reciprocal assumption is that the ‘not-overage’ can be physically abused, humiliated or disgraced. From that understanding, more can be gleaned from the comments in relation to power and identities. A careful look at the comments of Teacher 3 suggests that teachers ‘respect’ over-age students because they can be ‘trouble makers’. The uncritical counter point is that the ‘not-over-age’ students are objectified as ‘powerless’, and experience much of the student identities of *being nobodies*. On the contrary, this bespeaks of the persistence Malinowski’s (1936:513) advice to colonial educators to train African students in a manner that would not undermine aspects of traditional “age grades or chieftainships”. Also, as I will discuss in Chapter Seven, different students - straddling age categories - exercise some form of resistance to challenge their positioning as *being nobodies*.

A male over-age student (Student 14) stated,

Sir, me if anyone jokes with me eh I will beat him or her. The class prefect is afraid to write my name. Even the teachers know that if they beat me, I will let the boys in the village beat them. Me I will not forgive anyone. They don't touch some of us, like Kojo and Ekow ... [One-on-One interview, Friday, August 5, 2011]

This comment validates the teachers' fear that over-age students may hurt them. It also, highlights how male over-age students can defend their masculinity by acting 'tough' (Leach, 2003; Harber, 2004). But, I will argue that male over-age students acting tough to secure a safe space within the school and classroom give expression to the ways in which persisting authoritarian regulation in schools contributes to (re)producing social violence. Given that the student identities of *being nobodies* are not constructed only in relation to physical discipline, it is difficult to conclude that over-age students' 'acting tough' means that they are not positioned as *being nobodies*. I would argue that 'acting tough' rather bespeaks a strategy of resisting their positioning, in school, as *being nobodies* suggesting the role of school in the development of young masculinities built on violence.

A male teacher (Teacher 5) explained that,

We do not normally call the older children to answer questions except for questions about things happening in society which we know they can answer because of their age. Our reason is that the older children often feel embarrassed when they could not answer questions in the presence of the younger students. And you know we are very careful not to cane them... (Group Discussion with teachers, Tuesday November 22, 2011)

This comment by Teacher 5 does not indicate that age is respected in classroom interactions. It rather suggests the way in which teachers marginalise over-age students in classroom interactions. As discussed in Chapter Six, students are punished (by caning) for failure to answer questions correctly. In consequence, the convenient way teachers avoid caning over-age students is not to call them to answer questions. I would argue that this consignment of over-age students positions them as passive recipients of knowledge. As the teacher comments suggests they are positioned as *being nobodies* in pedagogic discourses as discussed earlier in this section (7.2). They

are positioned as people who do not know anything about the esoteric knowledge (Bernstein, 1990, 2000). It implied that over-age students were more passive during lesson delivery because teachers did not often call them to answer questions. Therefore, being over-age and 'acting tough' is not necessarily an advantage. It disadvantages the student in terms of participation in classroom lessons, which makes it difficult for them to develop what Salisbury & Jackson (1996) would refer to as *macho* academic values required to assume positions such as prefects which are based on academic excellence.

What can be argued is that, both over and non-overage students are treated as nobodies depending on the situation being analysed. The point is that age is a key structure of institutional life and the experience of students; and, given that research consistently points to high population of over-age enrolment in Ghana, there are important policies and practice implications that have not been addressed formally (see Akyeampong et al., 2007; Alhassan & Adzahlie-Mensah, 2010; Dunne & Ananga, 2013). Dunne and Ananga (2013:203) presented some messages, much of which I agree with. They argued that "without explicit acknowledgement of the home responsibilities of these students, at times, teachers treated them without sensitivity to their age differences with their younger classmates." As such, they suggested that policies are needed to address the institutional regimes that subordinate them as "a key focal point for intervention to increase sustained educational uptake." The data in my research suggests that the teachers treated them differently from other students and agrees with Dunne and Ananga (2013:204) that, "in contrast, to their adult out of school lives, over-age students were rendered childlike within school." In view of this, I argued that over-age students also become 'colonized subjects', in school, particularly in knowledge production. My proposition is that school policy reforms are necessary to respect, and to value, the humanity of over and non-over-age students. However, in terms of developing targeted interventions, I support that further research may explore, in detail, the experiences of over-age students to add substantially to the knowledge generated in this study; and to provide policy messages that can be addressed formally.

Being female

This section briefly discusses male-female gender-authority based power relations and their implications for students' identities as being nobodies. The discussions so far and some previous research in Ghana (Avotri et al., 2000; Colclough et al., 2000; Mirembe, 2002; Dunne et al., 2005a) highlight contradictions in the performance of traditional male-female gender stereotypes, which provide an important discursive resource in everyday school life (Epstein & Johnson 1998). As I discussed in Chapter Three, Pfann (1965), Debrunner (1967), Graham (1971) and McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh (1975) have pointed to gender stereotypic education as an important aspect of colonial education. As a reminder, these writers suggested, for example, that colonial education provided different kinds of training for girls and boys. These include needle work or sewing for girls while carpentry, masonry, blacksmithing, shoemaking were organised for boys.

I became interested in male-female identities because in the research school I observed **all** girls stand in front during morning assembly. Although students were required to line up according to the rule of *shortest in front* (see 5.3), I observed that all girls had to line up first such that the shortest boy followed the tallest girl. This suggests, as Avotri et al. (2000) argued, that gender issues are prevalent in primary schooling in Ghana. Dunne et al. (2005a) discussed gender role stratifications in which girls swept and boys cleaning the blackboard. However, there is little evidence of research discussing this form of gender segregation where all girls in each class are treated as if they were shorter than the shortest boys. Some student perspectives on the social assumption that all girls were shorter than the shortest boy are represented in the comments below.

Sir, I am short and I can't see if I stand behind the girls. When they say 'stretch your arms' my arms will pain me because my hand can't reach the tall girls' shoulder. (Student 13, Male)

Me, I don't care because it is the boys who will suffer. As for us we line up according to our height. They will suffer at the back. The only thing is that you have to dress properly so that the boys will not see your body and laugh at you (Student 6, Female)

How can you say 'shortest in front' and then the tall girl will be in front of the shortest boy? I don't know why because the short boys cannot see anything. I think they suffer. Sometimes when they say 'straighten up your lines' or when they say 'arms forward stretched' then you see that the short boys are suffering.
(Student 10, Female)

[Group interview with students]

Implied in the comments is the presence of group identities of 'we' and 'them' among students. This highlights the role of school in the arts of gender segregation and in drawing social categories that perpetrated sex-based gender tensions in the wider world. I would argue that, this arrangement where boys are positioned behind girls brings masculinity to school (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). For me this practice positions girls in front of boys and cynically requires them to become self-disciplined – dress properly - in order that boys do not laugh at them. The emphasis on 'being seen' arguably underlines the importance of public performance of girls' femininity and validation of heterosexual masculinity (Butler, 1990). For me, that form of 'being seen', which requires dressing properly constituted sufficient justification for harassing girls because, being girl also includes being a subject to be observed by males. I will further argue that this highlights the role of schools in spatial distributions and how the corporeal dimensions of belonging together are implicated in the processes of becoming particular sorts of persons (Dunne, 2007; du Gay, 2007). This further highlights the role of schools in gender reproductions and 'us' and 'them' categories that usually draw gender contours in wider society.

I sought teacher perspectives on the practice of gender segregation of boys and girls because I did not find any policy or literature explaining why girls should line-up in front before boys. Also, this segregation happens only when students gather for morning assembly. A female teacher (Teacher 2) I spoke to on the practice, explained:

It may look discriminatory but I don't think it is relevant. I don't know who started it or who introduced it but we all went through it. If you want to look at it carefully then it affects boys more, especially the shorter ones who line-up behind the taller girls. Besides, it has always been like that. I don't think it is anything significant. (One-on-One discussion, December 2, 2011)

Three things may be argued from her comments. First, she did not see the arrangement as posing much problem. In her view, the practice looks discriminatory but it is neither relevant nor anything significant to bother about. Second, the practice is age-old and its origins are unknown. Third, the practice affects boys and not girls. This illuminates Butler's (1993) point about sex-based gender performances and the point of Nayak and Kehily (2008) that schools play a formative role in the reproduction of sex-gender relations. Importantly though, it highlights how the informal curricula implemented in school becomes complicit in the reproduction of gender identities.

When I asked the headteacher about the practice of male-female segregation during morning assembly, she responded,

I don't really know. It was the practice when we all attended school in those days and I never asked why. I think it is something that reflects male dominance but I never heard anyone questioning it. ... It has been there since my school days in 1960s and, I think, maybe before then. Maybe we have to find out if it relates to how some Christian churches, remember they brought schooling here, separate women from men in the church. ... Maybe you researchers can help us understand why we have some of these practices in our school system, their effects and why policy makers don't seem to care about them (One-on-One discussion with Headteacher, Thursday December 2, 2011)

Although her comments indicate that the practice is age-old, the headteacher could not tell the exact basis or origins of the practice. Her assumption is that it might reflect the perpetuation of male social dominance. She also thinks that the origins of the practice may be traced to some Christian culture (where there is gender stratification between males and females). Recalling my days as a school child in two Ghanaian Basic schools, and as a teacher in the four different Ghanaian Basic schools I noticed that segregation during morning assembly is nearly universal in both public and private schools. One thing that might be interrogated is whether this is also related to the distinction in the missionary school system where Pfann (1965) and Debrunner (1967) noted that girls and boys studied different subjects. Whatever the origins, however, this sex-based gender segregation in school highlights what Butler (1990:140) would describe as a "sedimentation that over time produced a set of corporeal styles which, in

reified form, appear as a natural configuration of bodies into two sexes existing in a binary relation to one another.”

When I asked a male teacher (Teacher 3) who is also the assistant headteacher, he explained:

Master, this is a serious issue you raised. I personally never thought of it. But I can recollect those days when I was standing behind tall girls. It was difficult. We need to think about some of these things ... I am surprised that none of us seem to analyse it that it affects short boys. I don't know who introduced this thing and why but I think it needs to change. Is it uniformity or what? Maybe it is just our male dominance that men should be behind women and protect them or something that I don't know. (One-on-One discussion, December 2, 2011)

His comments also indicate that his main instinct attributes the practice to the perpetration of male dominance. The point that can be argued is that this institutionalised female subordination makes school girls subjects of surveillance by male students and teachers. This epitomises social reproduction of maleness and femaleness, which Lugones (2008) and Oyewùmí (1997) argued were transported to Africa by colonialism. As discussed in Chapter Two, these writers assert that one important act of colonialism was the inferiorization of women in all situations. The works of Davis (1981), Clarke et al. (1983), White (1985), Takaki (1993) explained how it was necessary to reduce colonized women of the Americas, Asia and Africa to equal the “characterization of white European women as fragile and sexually passive” (Lugones, 2007:13).

Writing about Africa, and using the case of the Yoruba in Nigeria, Oyewùmí (1997:156) argued that, the gender dynamics in Africa today “exists, albeit in concatenation with the reality of separate and hierarchical sexes imposed during the colonial period”. Oyewùmí (1997:123-125) noted that “The creation of “women” as a category was one of the very first accomplishments of the colonial state.” Oyewùmí further argued that one indelible mark of colonialism is “the emergence of women as an identifiable category, defined by their anatomy and subordinated to men in all situations”. Oyewùmí further asserts that “For females, colonization was a twofold process of racial inferiorization and gender subordination.” In the post-colonial period, African males

accepted the established Western gender norms and colluded with the inferiorization of females. Connell (2002) would call this the 'crystallising' of geological metaphors which centre on the primacy of heterosexual desire established over time and therefore perceived as natural and immutable. This sounds plausible given that there is hardly any explanation for the segregation in school.

In the case study school, sex-based gender discriminations do not seem to change when girls are appointed as prefects, which support Butler's (1993) point that male-female body distinctions still matter in the analysis of social interactions. In the research school, the girl prefects were less visible unless a teacher specifically asked students to call, "the Office Girl" or the "Girl's Prefect". In such circumstances, I noticed the 'Girl' was used both as a qualifier such as in "Office Girl" or to serve a restraining function such as in "Girl's Prefect". Girl prefects were used more in service areas. They were sent to buy food, clean-up and keep teachers' chairs or wash dishes. They provided water in bowls for teachers to wash their hands. The Office Girls cleaned the headteacher's office. Girl section leaders were more active in engaging students to sweep the compound and classrooms. The boy prefects usually acted as the dominant *inspectors* in supervising the performance of morning duties, wrote names and commanded the morning assembly. So, among the prefects, the girls resigned to more docile roles while boys pre-dominated. I observed the predominance of boys more when teachers asked students to call prefects. The students would normally call the boy prefects. This also highlights Oyewùmí (1997:123) point that "The very process by which females were categorized and reduced to "women" made them ineligible for leadership roles."

The positioning of girls (females) in front of boys equally highlights the ways in which gender identities are constructed within what Butler (1990) would described as the constraints of the 'heterosexual matrix'. This heterosexual matrix refers to social relations and pathological gender relations that are cyclically entrenched through sex-based (hetero-) 'normalised' identities (Osler, 2006). Lugones (2007) traced the basis of this to Oyewùmí's (1997) concept of anafemales (which rejects the analysis of

problems of women through a gender lens but through cognitive needs of capitalism and the naturalizing of the identities and relations of coloniality). It also explains “the fusing of the experiences of colonialism and coloniality with the necessities of capitalism” (Quijano, 2000:343). As Lugones (2007) and Oyewùmí (1997) argued, pre-colonial societies did not marginalize women. Lugones argued, however, that “the gender system introduced was one thoroughly informed through the coloniality of power” and were pivotal “in disintegrating communal relations, egalitarian relations, ritual thinking, collective decision making, collective authority, and economies” (Lugones, 2007:12). She asserts that “the imposition of this gender system was as constitutive of the coloniality of power as the coloniality of power was constitutive of it.” Lugones argued, “inferiorization of anafemales extended very widely from exclusion from leadership roles to loss of property over land, and other important economic domains.”

Given these arguments, I suggest that the gender subordination of girls is one attribute of the institution of schooling in Ghana. Over the years, the practice has sedimented and has become normalised. As such, being female has become synonymous with being short, being watched and the performance of service functions. This does not mean that the identities of *being nobodies* has further complications for females than for males. What it highlights is the point by Nayak and Kehily (2008:97-98) that the modern institution of schooling is a site where particular technologies (connected to a web of local and global flows) for gender production is in occurrence” and, in which, gender formation “is subject to state governmentality”. As discussed earlier with reference to caning, boys (males) also receive severer punishment than girls. Therefore, the main point of this subsection is that it calls attention to the role of schools in the reproduction of ideologies of control in order that the institution can be re-organised to be an agent of social change that is more beneficial - more proactive in challenging gender stratifications than reproducing them.

Religious otherness

This section discusses the student identities of being nobodies in terms of religious otherness. The empirical literature on schooling in Ghana, which I reviewed in Chapter Three made mentions of religious identities. Although the literature is scanty, it provides knowledge that religion was an important component of colonial schooling. The discussion of the school timetable (Chapter Five) and assessment of learning in Chapter Six also points out that religious education is ingrained within schooling in Ghana. However, there is little knowledge about how religious identities are (re)produced and resisted in school although there is evidence that religious indoctrination was central to the civilising agenda of colonial schooling (see Luggard, 1922; Pfann, 1965; Debrunner, 1967; GES, 2001; Asare-Danso, 2008). As such, the discussion in this section is a contribution to understanding religious difference in schools.

As described earlier in Chapter Five, school worship was part of the official activities listed on school timetable and was conducted in monotheistic fashion although Ghana is a secular state. Religious difference was not encouraged in the school.

During interviews students commented on the religious practices school as illustrated below:

Sir, they teach us that there are three main religions in Ghana, Islamic, Christian and traditional religion! Why are we not allowed to do our religion also? They force us to behave like Christians. They will cane you if you refuse to go to worship. (Student 3, Male)

I told my parents and I will leave this school next year, they should take their school. Last term they seized my shilla [amulet] and they were calling me 'Mallam'. (Student 5, Male)

They laugh at us too, we those who don't go to Church or mosque they call us 'abosamba' [Satan's children]. You cannot report because the teachers also say it. (Student 2, Female)

Some teachers and students laugh at some of us because of our religion. If you come to school and they see something here [pointing to the forehead] they will say 'Amin, Amin'. They laugh at us. (Student 1, Male)

(Group Interview, November 4, 2011)

It may be observed that students were using identity markers in phrases such as, '*they force us*', '*we are not allowed*', '*they should take their school*', '*they laugh at us*', '*they will say*', '*they were calling me*'. The comments suggest underlying notions of religious discrimination and the vilification of some beliefs to the extent that it establishes zones that make people to see themselves and others in their difference. Primarily, the comments denote religious regulation where practices were based more on Christianity, and the use of Bible passages. The comments speak of the role of religion in the "colonization" of the institutional "lifeworld, in terms of imposing/promoting dominant value systems and practices" (Mitra, 2010:574). It suggests the reification of the dominant religion and the disbarment of other religious values. Characteristically, teachers-on-duty usually led students in singing Christian songs. Christian prayers were said. The teachers monitored to ensure that all students complied with specific norms of behaviour: all students had to close their eyes during prayers, clap their hands while singing, recite the Lord's Prayer, and usually, give donations (make financial contributions) during the worship. Although it is important that students observe school rules and participate in school activities, the problem that arises from the comment concerns the coercion to observe religious practices that constitutes denial of religious freedom to people in a democratic culture.

When I asked teachers about student religious identities, they made the following comments:

Here we cause the children to do what they don't do at home because they don't have the power to say 'No'. You see we know that some of the children complain about the worship service, particularly the praises and worship, and the way we pray. ...It is a serious challenge because we will be dividing the school into different categories if we permit all religions. We cannot conduct different services for different groups. (Teacher 3, Male)

...our tradition is archaic and we must teach these children to know Christ when they come to school. Islam and violence are bedfellows; I cannot tolerate it in any school for as long as I remain a teacher there. (Headteacher, Female)

How can we cane people for not attending religious service? I don't like it at all. I am Christian but I do not believe it is fair to impose my religion on others. People should practice what they believe. (Teacher 6, Female)

The comments express religious regulation in the school. The comments include tacit admission that students are forced to observe some religious practices. The headteacher's comments further explained the objectivizing of some religious beliefs. She conceptualizes that it was necessary to teach Christian principles to students when they enroll in school. The argument suggests that she views the school as a place for religious 'civilisation' or (re)orientation. This highlights anti-colonial criticisms of how schools as institutions can be used for oriental purposes (see Said, 1978). Her comments suggests how religion can be used to define "actions as evil, [so that] spiritual consequences can be attributed to the actions that deter group members from participating in such activities" (Haviland, 2002:362). Haviland's *cultural anthropology* provides several lessons on how religion is, and can be used, to change a people's culture. The headteacher's comments also draws our attention back to the persistence of Luggard's (1922:432) eulogizing of the ways in which religious missionary activities have been 'helpful' in transforming the colonized societies into "communities whose standards have been molded by centuries of Christian ethics".

The comments of Teacher 6 indicate that not all teachers are religiously intolerant. It suggests the persistence of elements of resistance, which also speaks of how coloniality causes dislocations and tensions within Ghanaian society (Busia, 1964; Woolman, 2001). Additionally, the point that she could not challenge the imposition of religious practices on the students highlights how school hierarchy positions the headteacher to exercise absolute authority in the school.

From a human rights perspective, I wondered why a public school could not provide space for religious difference. Many questions may be asked: Is this how schools sow the seeds of fundamentalism? Is it how schools are preparing students for religious

intolerance? How do such practices harm the development of democratic principles? These questions are important because religious freedom is entrenched as a fundamental human right in Chapter Five of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana. A world 'infested' with human rights values, should wonder why students are denied religious freedom in schools. A plausible explanation is there are persisting legacies of religious regulation which dominated colonial schooling as schooling was central to the promotion of religious values that were part promoted as part of the civilising mission of colonialism. As Molteno et al (2000) argued, education ministry officials who were beneficiaries of colonial education have sustained such practices. The persistence of such practices also gives credence to Adjei's (2007) proposition that there has been little critical review of Ghana's education system since independence.

Being 'disabled'

This section discusses the experiences of disabled students. During group interview session, a female student (Student 3) rushed out to support a disabled student who was experiencing difficulty climbing the stairs leading to the classroom. When she returned she said,

If I am like this, I will not come to school; ... He is suffering too much. After all what? Sir, ... what is it? Even people who do not go to school are eating and they have money. They have work to do. What is it? ... Me, I will not come to school if I am like this. I swear! (Student 3, Male)

My reading of the girl's comments led me to find out more about the experiences of disabled students in the school. Her comments suggest disabled students have special experiences. The following are some other student responses.

My brother stopped school because he cannot climb these things (pointing to the stairs). Every day we carry him and we do that during break time too. And we are not in the same class too. Sometimes he will not go to break because he feels ashamed when we always carry him... One day he said he will not come to school again and he stopped. (Student 5, Male)

Sir, you see even the desk in the classroom is not comfortable to us. We cannot stretch our legs. My brother was suffering more. He has to squeeze himself in that desk every day. ... some students also laugh at him so he stopped school (Student 7, Male Prefect)

Sir, look at this boy suffering like that. But the teachers think that those people (the disabled) are wicked that is why God punished them that way. They cane them like us. (Student 8, Female)

[Group interview, November 11, 2011].

Student 5 points to the challenges posed by physical facilities. His suggestion is that the entrances to classrooms are not disability friendly. This makes it difficult for disabled students to access classrooms. The resultant issue (depending on peers for assistance) cascaded into eventual dropping out of school and turning them into another direction which gives them a future they do not expect to have. It refers to Wallace's (1998) point about institutional norms in which students occupy the very categories by which they are constituted. Student 7 added that social relations and the physical facilities privilege normalcy and created an uncondusive climate for people with disability. Student 8 corroborated further that there is no equity in the way teachers discipline disabled students. There are too significant points that can be highlighted from the student comments. The first is that being disabled is perceived as a marker of wickedness. The second is that disability is perceived as God's punishment to the individual. As a result, disabled students receive little support to cope with the nature of physical facilities; they are scorned by students and teachers. They are punished as normal students. These comments shows how the institutions of schooling become what Smith (2005) calls a 'retail trading' station for patriarchal identities, which in Foucault's (1995:199) terms, encourages "disciplinary partitioning" by which certain identities (and knowledge) are privileged (Adjei, 2007). In this case normalcy is privileged and disability is not accounted for.

The comments below show transcripts of my conversations with a male disabled student.

Me: What do you think about schooling?

Student 15: *School is not good at all. Even me they cane me if I am late. Sometimes they will laugh at you. When the P6 teacher was going to cane me at assembly on Tuesday, he said 'Look at you, how can you be late? What do you do in the house? You can't even*

sweep but you are late to school'. .. Sir, here teachers don't teach anything. Every day, when they teach us it is either English or Maths and sometimes they talk about all these church things. Sir look at the classroom, the wall is broken. I fear if the building is collapsing in a storm how will I run?

Me: So how do you feel when you come to school?

Student 15: *You see I am the only one here now. All my friends [disabled students] have stopped school. Sir, in this school ... Everything the teacher canes you... Sir, both teachers and some students they laugh at me. ...If my parents don't force me I will stop school, I swear!*

Me: Do you like school?

Student 15: *Sir, you see school is good because sometimes you meet friends and play. You may get a good work in future too. But we don't learn anything! If you come to school, teachers only cane you. They say don't talk in class, they don't respect you but they don't come to teach you. They don't give you books to read too. Me, I cannot carry books from the houseYou cannot play too ... School is not for everyone because the teachers think that some of us are useless.*

(One-on-One Interview, October 19, 2011)

The student's responses in the scenario suggest his dislike for school due to experiences with caning and verbal humiliation, although he was also uniquely concerned about the broken classroom walls. His response to the second question reveals symptoms of how physically challenged students "recognise themselves in their difference" (MacLure et al., 2012:457). For this student, it suggests a feeling of isolation from the community of 'normal' students. He also perceives himself as a subject of scorn. Although his response to the third question illustrates that the disabled student has some positive perceptions of school other comments suggests that being disabled is also denigrated as being 'useless'. This concerns how the disabled student is positioned by other 'normal' interlocutors, particularly teachers.

A male teacher (Teacher 5) stated,

Those people [the disabled] do not deserve any special treatment. It is only God who knows why he disables them. They can be wicked and treacherous. You don't pity those people because even in that state, you cannot do what they can

do. They are very dangerous guys. I don't pity them anyway and I don't think I will. (Informal Group Discussions with teachers, November 22, 2011)

This teacher comment ascribes various identities (*wicked, treacherous* and *very dangerous guys*) to disabled students. The teacher contends that disabled students do not deserve pity – special assistance due to their disability. This surprised me because, from insider knowledge of teacher education in Ghana, I was aware that the core Special Education course at the Colleges of Education exposes teachers to various interventions and support needed to support students with disabilities. Therefore, I asked the teachers if they took courses in special education as part of pre-service training. A female teacher (Teacher 2) responded:

You see, those teaching at the Teacher Training Colleges (the former name for the Colleges of Education) do not know what they are talking about. Yes, we can make sitting arrangements for those with eye and hearing problems. Apart from that I think they are the same as other human beings. You know they say we all have one form of disability or the other. If that argument is true, then no one actually needs any special attention. We are all the same. I treat all students as the same. Whether I am teaching or not; all students are the same. I am telling you that those so called special children are more dangerous... (Informal Group Discussions with teachers, November 22, 2011).

A female teacher (Teacher 4) interjected,

I don't agree entirely with Abla's [not real name] argument but, I think those students think their disability should be an excuse to pardon them for indiscipline. I don't do that. Discipline must apply to all people. After all, the principle in a democracy is 'equality before the law'. So why should some people be treated differently. In fact, those so called special children can be very dangerous. (Informal Group Discussions with teachers, November 22, 2011).

Implied in the comments is a strong conviction that disabled students deserve no special attention because they are the same as all other students. Being disabled is associated with the characteristics of being dangerous. This provides some insights to support research in Ghana which found that teachers were unwilling to have disabled students in their class (Agbenyegah, 2006). However, it also raises an idea of framing students and objectifying them with generalised characteristics that are related to 'normalised' identities, which are theoretically apparent in Foucault's (1996)

explanations of the situation of schools as sites where locating normalcy and its slipperiness becomes the source of power and identities. The point of argument is that social relations in the school do not support inclusiveness - it suggests that pathological identities are cyclically entrenched and reproduced through the institution of schooling as suggested by Nayak and Kehily (2008) and Osler (2006) among others.

To conclude this section, the discussions highlight categories that contribute to our understanding of how schooling perpetuates rather than challenges existing inequalities in society (Harber, 2004). The various identities bespeak what Butler (1990) would call 'gender trouble' and identity politics. The student identities of *being nobodies* and the various cartographies reflect how the school site is implicated in the production of gender and the cultural making of class that work at level of the body to produce characteristics that fix and control some groups while enabling others to become resourceful and mobile. I would suggest that the students' schooling identities of being nobodies shows how school relations tend to normalize the social relations of domination created by years of colonial conquest (Quijano, 2005). It also suggests the persistence of marginalising institutional regimes of power and the associated violence that students experience in school. The identities (either of being a prefect; a female; or a disabled student) necessarily requires the image of an 'other' located in the exteriority of space (Castro-Gomez, 2007:429). These dimorphic identities speak of imposition of norms – of behaviour, of religion etc. – at the school site.

7.3 Why Students Stay in School

This analysis in this section focusses on the critical question: "why do students continue in school despite their positioning as 'nobodies'?"

Student comments on why they stay in school include the following

as for schooling it is good only that they cane too much. I know I will become somebody ... and they will not cane me again. I can't stop school because I know what I want. I want to become like them. If I stay in school I will complete and become teacher or nurse in future. (Student 4, Female)

I don't like school but I cannot stop because I know what I want ... [and] caning cannot stop me. I come to school because I know that I want to become somebody. (Student 7, Male Prefect)

I will not come to school always, but Sir, I want to learn so that I can also become somebody. ... No matter what I will complete school and they will not cane me again. (Student 8, Female)

if you follow the teachers' caning and stop school you destroy your future. I know what I want so caning cannot stop me. I want to get a good job in future. (Student 9, Male Prefect)

[Group interview, Monday December 5, 2011]

The student comments indicate that they distinguished the development possibilities of the institution from its sociality. The comments indicate they either want to *become somebody* or *want to get a good job*. The basic proposition that these comments speak of are the neoliberal development understandings of the value of formal education as the main path to personal development (see for example Smith, 1979; Lockheed et al., 1980; Cochrane et al., 1980; Tikly, 2005). As Student 4 indicates, the common reason students gave to explain why they remained in school was, *I want to become ...* [doctor, teacher, nurse etc.]. These comments do not only suggest that students see schooling as preparation for work. My basic proposition is that they felt compelled to be in school because of perceptions of formal education as extending opportunities, knowledge, skill and capabilities that support economic mobility of those who are marginalised. As discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis, local policy in Ghana since independence actively promoted this worldview of Western formal education as a given good, and the **only** path to personal development and full participation in national life (see for example, Accelerated Development Plan for Education, 1951; Articles 25, 28, 30, 34 and 38 of the 1992 Constitution; GES, 2001; MOESS, 2008). Programmes and legal provisions for 'free compulsory universal education' (FCUBE) have been built on the idea that "it is only through universal education that we can give our people the full opportunity to develop their latent abilities and intelligence" (The Parliamentary Debates, official report 1961:17). I would suggest that this argument about the value of schooling, and, regimes of compulsory education has laid the foundations that 'condemn' students to 'institutional colonisation'. By institutional colonization, I mean

becoming inserted into imposed and dominant value systems and normative practices that deny difference, and enforced through negative - but legally recognized – sanctions such as physical punishment.

The disabled student (Student 16) I interviewed said,

My father tells me that it is good to attend school. Every morning they make sure I come [to school]. I think they are happy when I come to school because they can be free.... They can go to the farm without thinking about who is going to take care of me... Sir, I will stop school if my parents don't force me because school is not good for some of us. [One-on-One Interview, October 19, 2011]

There are two aspects of the boy's comments. First, he understood schooling as good because the parents are saying so. Although his response to the question implied that he has some concept of the developmental possibilities of schooling he argues now schooling as an obligation imposed by his father. Thus he does not seem to have a personal conception of schooling as good for personal and national development. Second, he problematized his parents' commitment to his being in school every day as a compulsion that benefits the parents. I would argue that the last part of his comments suggests that he sees the school as what Meighan (1999:4) described as "compulsory day-detention centre". This might account for his desires to stop school because he does not see school as "learning arena[s] which are welcoming, supportive and nurture potential" (Lewin, 2007: 33). His comments also lend credence to the view that, "schooling is not necessarily universally or automatically perceived as beneficial" (Harber, 2004: 21).

Three students I put the question to in one-on-one interviews commented as follows:

my parents will not allow me to stay in the house so I have to come to school.
(Student 14, Female)

I come to school because I cannot be in the house alone when everybody goes to school. (Student 11, Male)

Sir, I don't like school because you don't have freedom, you cannot play, only the KG children; and the teachers cane too much but you can play with friends at school sometimes. Anytime you don't want to go to school, my parents will always say school is free and compulsory for all children in Ghana. All children must go to school. You must go to school ... (Student 10, Female Prefect)

These student comments require drawing on a broader canon of thought to reflect on the formative role of schooling. Their comments do not indicate that they appreciate the development externalities of schooling as argued by in Ghanaian policy documents and internationally (GOG, 2004; MOE, 2008; GMR, 2011; GMR, 2012). They rather indicate that some students are attending as an imposed performance (Salisbury & Jackson, 1996) based on parental understandings of the whole idea of compulsory universal basic education (UBE) which is embedded in EFA goals. This presents a critique of human capital understandings schooling in developing countries, which Harber (2004) would argue, does not usually acknowledge the role of authoritarianism. It speaks to Illich's (1971) point about forcing children to be in school such that, being a student seemed synonymous with a process of *becoming* enlisted, wittingly, into self-fashioning by social agents.

The next section addresses how students cope with their regulation and identities within school.

7.4 Students' Negotiation Strategies: Silence as Power

This section continues the analysis by focusing on the students strategies of resistance. It specifically presents data on how students navigate their identities of *being nobodies* within the school regimes discussed in Chapter Five and Chapter Six.

How students cope with teacher regulation occurred to me one morning as I talked with a girl (Student 13). A male teacher (Teacher 1) appeared. He ordered the girl, *Hey, go to Class Two [Primary Two Classroom] and bring a chair for him*. The student moved away, quietly as though she were obeying the order. Rather, she took a few steps and returned to reactivate the discussion with me. The teacher became furious; *didn't you hear what I asked you to do?* But the student simply replied, *No Sir, I did not hear you*. The teacher re-ordered, *I say go to Class Two and get a chair for him!* Again, the girl took few steps started a conversation with a group of students. So the teacher asked another student to get me a seat but he too continued to chat with the friends. The teacher turned to me and said,

you see these students, that is how they are sometimes. They will never utter a word but will simply refuse to do what you are commanding. They know that if they say no you will pressure them so they keep quiet and go away. This one if I ask him too, he will simply say, 'I did not hear you'. And truly you cannot tell whether they are pretending or telling you the truth that they did not hear you (One-on-One informal discussion with Teacher 1, Tuesday, July 5, 2011)

The teacher's comments indicate that the students use silence as 'agentic voice'. His argument is that, the strategy of silence is applied by both boys and girls as a counter force to teacher authority. As he indicates the strategy seemed effective because it inhabits Ghandi's concept of silence resistance. Ryu (2009) also identified silence as a resistant strategy. The power of silence as resistance is in its uncertainties that spur the search for meaning (MacLure et al., 2007). By search for meaning, I mean what MacLure et al. (2007:1) described as 'silence' which requires the trace of something 'Other' at the heart of utterance - something intractable, unspeakable, unreasonable, unanalyzable - that confounds interpretation and manifests, intolerably, the illusory status of speech as full "presence" or living voice. The power of this silence, however, is that causes teachers to wonder: whether the student truly heard and is rebelling or did not genuinely hear what has been said. As such, it leaves teachers wondering whether the student's action could be punished or not.

When I later asked the female student (Student 13) why she refused the teacher's order to get me a seat, her explanation was

Sir, I like you but our Sir like that too much. He is not happy that I talk with you. But if I say, 'No' he will beat me so I say, 'I don't hear'. Everybody do it sometimes. You see Kojo⁹ also refused to go? But you cannot say it. You just keep quiet and when they ask you then you say 'I did not hear'. (One-on-one interview, Tuesday, July 5, 2011)

Implicit in this comment are experiential assumptions about teacher behaviours. In effect, silence (not verbally expressing her disapproval) was the only way she could express her dissatisfaction with the teacher's request. Her comments suggest that the

⁹ This reference was to the boy who also refused to get me the chair. Kojo is not his real name.

silence was a purposive resistance to an objectified teacher practice - *if I say, 'No' he will beat me*. As such the strategy (of using silence) seemed well-rehearsed, pre-determined. The pronoun '*you*' in the comment, *you say 'I did not hear'*, assumes a plural form which explains the generalised reference: *Everybody do it sometimes*.

These are some other student comments

You mean what can we do or what? You cannot challenge the teachers. ... Maybe you can only stop school. Even if you talk ... you bring more problems to yourself. Eh! You just keep quiet... what are you going to say? Eh! Who are you? Sir, forget... (Student 1, Male)

Me ... I swear to you that if anyone talk they will die. ... Maybe you can talk because you are not here or you are old but ... no we cannot talk. We just keep quiet or you stop school (Student 4, Female)

(Group interview with critical case sample, Monday August 22, 2011)

These statements imply that the generality of students see themselves as 'tongue tied' (Painter, 2010). They cannot verbally communicate their disapproval of what teachers tell them to do. What they do is to use silence as an 'agentic voice', which as discussed in Chapter Four, or a form of communication usually occurring among people with a history of extreme abuse and victimization, as well as instability in relationships (see Lane et al., 2002). From the student comments I chose to read silence with its "alterity" rather than seeking to cure or compensate for its necessary insufficiencies (MacLure et al., 2007:1). I read their silence as a form of resistance that is more paralysing in students' conversational engagement with teachers because "the enigma at the heart of the silence remains" to displace or replace something that should have taken place (see Sixsmith, 2004:6; MacLure et al., 2007:9). I would argue with MacLure et al. that the displacement and replacement are the "originary complications": the secret meaning at the heart of silence as a speech act that does not result in the relief of explanation, but "disseminates itself in something unanalysable and unspeakable" (MacLure et al., 2007:9) that always remains for teachers to grapple with. When the students speak of becoming somebodies, I read it with Anzaldua's (1987:59) idea that

they hope to “overcome the tradition of silence” into which they became immersed in school.

I also encountered different scenarios where students used silence as both passive resistance and agentic ‘voice’ to challenge teacher authority. In one instance when the teacher-on-duty commanded: *stretch your arms*, some students in Primary Two were squatting while others in Primary Four also did not stretch their arms. On another occasion, when a teacher directed, *attention, straighten up your lines!* Some students in Primary Five and Five continued to talk while some in Primary Six girls were pinching each other. On five different occasions when teachers requested all students to close their eyes during worship, I saw some students opened their eyes. What was interesting is that other students including seniors did not report this ‘misconduct’. When I asked a Senior-on-duty why they did not report the misconduct, she explained:

Sir, we all do it sometimes. You just silently pretend you did not hear. So you refuse to obey the teachers command. Later you say I did not hear. If you report they will report you too one day. (One-on-one interview with a Senior-on-duty, Monday July 4, 2011)

The comment epitomises a sense of mutual connivance among students to use ‘silence’ as a form of resistance. It suggests that prefects were aware of this but do not ‘give-up’ colleagues for punishments when students employ silence as a form of resistance, because they also rely on such strategy. Therefore using silence as a form of resistance is the students own ‘conspiracy of silence’ (Leach, 2001) that they employ to resist teacher authoritarianism. Silence becomes their main negotiation strategy for resistance. This silence is spoken of by many in the literature as a both a sign of coloniality and a perplexing tool for resistance. In schooling, and even for researchers, MacLure et al. (2011:1002) explained how silence ‘stutters’ understanding:

the point at which interpretation stutters and the rage for explanation (by teachers and ourselves) turns back on itself in a kind of vibrating immobility. Or an *impassibility*, to use another of Deleuze’s (2004, p. 109) words. ...silence - something that is, and is not, part of the linguistic system - caused interpretation to stutter, exposing the rage for explanation - almost a literal rage at times - on the part of school staff, parents, and researchers. Instances such as these, where bodily matters resist incorporation into representational schemata, but at

the same time seem to demand this, reveal the routine machinations of representation in education and research.

Other student comments on their negotiation strategies include the following.

if I don't want to go to the farm I don't come to school (Student 5, Male)

if you don't want to bring gravel you don't come to school (Student 2, Female)

Sir, if you know the teacher is not coming to school, you also stay at home. If you come to school they will cane ... Even they will say don't talk in class. You stay at home and eat and save your buttocks (Student 7, Male)

The comments suggest that some students employ lateness and absenteeism/truancy as strategies of silence in response to the regulatory practices in school. Whereas this is uncommon in the literature, it calls attention to the need to explore students' perspectives on truancy – which is usually treated in the literature in relation to household poverty, gender choices and child labour as well as other simplistic factors (see the works of, Glick & Sahn, 2000; Colclough et al., 2000; Nekatibeb, 2002; Ersado, 2005; Grant & Hallman, 2006; Fentiman, 1999; GSS, 2003; Hashim, 2005; Aikman & Unterhalter, 2005). The perspectives expressed by the students in this study call our attention to the need for exploring understandings of truancy from students' perspectives, most especially in rural areas. Some studies from Ghana have begun this 'adventure' of exploring understandings of education in African 'villages' (see for example Pryor & Ampiah, 2003; Obeng, 2002) who argued that students described school as 'uninteresting' places. Obeng's (2002) confessionalist ethnography provided knowledge that students described school as "hell" because of experiences with intimidation, humiliation and beatings, which often lead to gradual discouragement from schooling. These studies and the data from the students' comments above suggest that analysing absenteeism from students' perspectives will provide insights into how colonial modes of regulation and discipline within Ghanaian basic schools may have negative consequences for achieving EFA.

However, as discussed earlier in 7.2.2 not all students are comfortable with this passive resistance as a coping strategy. Over-age students 'acted tough' and were not

essentially docile. The following are other student comments on their navigation strategies.

I attend school worship because I don't want them to cane me. But, me, I don't pay 'collection' and nobody can force me to pay. I don't go to church so I don't know what they mean by 'collection'. ... some of my friends take money from their parents. Some of them use their feeding money to pay collection! But the teachers don't even tell you what money is used for. ... Which work are they doing for God here! I just say I don't have money. What will you do to me? Nothing! You can only cane me or give me money to contribute. (Student 12, Female)

I know they don't like some of us; they don't like me. When I come to school late I know that they will cane me. I don't care what they do to me anymore. I just prepare to receive the cane (Student 14, Female)

Sir, we know that they will cane us so we wear many shorts and shirts to protect our back and bottom. That is why they sometimes cane our hands and legs. (Student 1, Male)

These comments suggest that students employ several strategies in their silence. One seems to be a case of developing a 'rebellious' attitude. Like the over-age students, Student 12 (not-overage) asserts herself. She is not a Christian but feels coerced to attend school worship. However, she is a 'rebel' - she does not, and is not prepared to, make financial contributions - to 'donate' money to God's work during the school worship on Wednesdays. The comments of Students 1 and 14 focus on how students are able to cope with caning as the form of discipline in the school. They have become 'resigned' to regulation. They have come to associate schooling with violence (physical punishment). They 'dress up' and prepare in anticipation of physical punishment. These students' comments would support Harber's (2004) point that control and surveillance does not work on all students in the same way - many rebel, disobey and react violently.

It may be argued that the comments of students suggesting that they use silence mainly as their navigation strategy speaks of school as a violent place. Students do not see schools as "learning arenas which are welcoming, supportive and nurture potential" (Lewin, 2007:33). School is a place where they 'suffer' different forms of violence in silence (CRDD, 2001) because reporting mechanisms are very weak in

Ghana (Parkes et al., 2013). Although silencing is a central feature of coloniality (Malinowski, 1936; Plan International, 2008; Antonowicz, 2010; Stambach, 2010), the students in this study fall back on 'silence' as a counter hegemonic force. But, the reliance on silence also serves to entrench students' position as 'colonized subjects' because it contributes little to disrupt the relations of domination. I would argue that this 'silence' opens up a subject for further research. It links to my points about indigenous knowledge for example. It may be discussed, for example, as students' ways to of resisting the 'silencing' of their indigenous language. It may be discussed as the way in which denial of rights to the expression of linguistic and religious identity in school works on students. Therefore, I would suggest that the students 'silence' rather than being a blank or assent may communicate a host of meanings that 'western' theorising has missed. It may be useful for research to continue to explore this 'silence' in order to add to the knowledge that is generated by the present research.

7.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have highlighted the constitutive role of schooling in producing patterns of school interactions and identities. It highlights the students' identities of *being nobodies* – a state of being powerless, which position one as passive and docile in relation to teacher authority. I have also focused to go beyond a notion of the homogenised students to explore different categories as juniors, seniors, prefects, and others, which became gendered as entry points for expressing power (Dunne, 2009). The various cartographies draw attention to looking at the positioning of groups and their abilities (or otherwise) to negotiate space for their desires (Nayak & Kehily, 2008).

I have also discussed how students are mainly 'forced' by neoliberal ideologies behind EFA to remain in school and the ways in which they employ silence as their main strategy of resistance. I argued that, although very powerful, the use of silence as a negotiation strategy, further positioned students as *being nobodies* and reinforced the position of schools as 'colonial institutions'. In the next chapter, I sum up the insights from the three analysis chapters and provide my thoughts on the value of further research into student perspectives.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY AND REFLECTIONS

8.1 Introduction

Since the beginning of this research, I have navigated meanings among texts and persons. I have written thousands of words in my bid to discuss and advance several arguments. This last chapter primarily aims to draw the findings of the three analysis chapters together based on the main research questions; to sum up the theoretical and methodological reflections; and, to present the implications of the research. It is organised in five main sections. The first section (8.2) summarises the analytical points of the three analysis chapters with reference to the main research questions outlined in Chapter Three. Section 8.3 discusses the implications of the main conclusions from the research. Section 8.4 is where I present the contributions of the thesis to knowledge. Section 8.5 presents the propositions for further research. Finally, section 8.6 discusses my reflections on the theoretical and methodological approaches to the research.

8.2 Summary of findings

The aim of this research was to explore students' experiences within school regimes in Ghana, giving emphasis to the perspectives of students on their in-school identities. This section draws the main findings of the three analysis Chapters together. The main questions that were explored, and which the findings should answer are:

1. What are the regimes of power in school?
2. What are the students' perspectives on the regimes of power in school?
3. What identities do students develop in relation to the regimes of power in school?
4. How do students negotiate their identities within the regimes of power in school?

8.2.1 School as a place of regulation

My first claim in this thesis is that the students involved in this research perceived school as a place of regulation where they become enmeshed in institutional controls

that provide little space for both democratic engagement and the co-construction of knowledge. This claim 'speaks to' the first and second research questions: *What are the regimes of power in school?* and *What are the students' perspectives on the regimes of power in school?*

The analysis in Chapters Five and Six showed that every aspect of school life placed a hold on students' conduct. The school is organized within hierarchies in school policy documents, as rational instruments of control and standards, which ensure teachers exercise absolute control over students. The school's hierarchical organisation was highly formalised with power positions – where teachers, prefects and seniors-on-duty monitor students at every level of task and interaction, and which the students could not challenge. School hierarchy became Jeremy Bentham's metaphorical panopticon that captured students in an overall field of visibility while prompting them to convert the external eye of the inspection into the internal eye of conscience (Hubbard et al., 2010:167). The morphemes in every dialectic student expression (enactment or spoken word) required a sense of submission to 'self-discipline'.

The school timetable as a management tool regulated students to observe what Harber (2004) described as workplace regimes of regularity and punctuality. Whereas that may be viewed as unproblematic in itself, the business model of training a workforce seemed to influence the regimes of conduct in ways antithetical to democratic engagements. It provided a justification for identifying and punishing behaviour such as lateness as non-compliance.

Chapter Five further highlights that, to enforce compliance to the timetable, the school code of discipline retained caning as the main form of punishment, and justifies the managerial 'right' of teachers to administer physical punishment. These policy provisions - on the authority patterns and forms of discipline - relegated students out of decision-making processes, where the prefectorial system became a fantasy of empowerment used to further impose power regimes on students. All these, placed

both conceptual and concrete limitations on the competences of students to resist teacher authority.

Chapter Six highlights that the official school curriculum retained the colonial idea of controlling discourses in schooling through ideologies of indoctrination and cultural assimilation. Knowledge production practices promoted coloniality of knowledge where school discourses were not framed to teach students to think critically and know how to question what they see and hear (Dei, 2004; Miller, 2006). The pedagogic practices addressed in Chapter Six showed that school processes were based on a colonial pedagogy of standardization involving fixity of knowledge in a prescribed curriculum, imparted through what Miller (2006) described as a poisonous pedagogy premised in teacher authoritarianism, treating students as a 'resource' and their learning as a 'product'. Curriculum knowledge placed the accent on a monolithic worldview that does not provide space for critical engagements in classroom interaction. As such, student participation in knowledge production in the school was peripheral and passive because, the curriculum is prescribed and delivered in classrooms through teacher-fronted models of teaching. This performance mode relegated student intellectual properties; ensured that teachers denied students pedagogic rights; and dismissed them to peripheral participation in knowledge construction. The students' childhood-community street wisdom and pre-school identities, their local language, culture and knowledge, were de-privileged as less useful knowledge in the delivered curriculum and subsequently dismissed in favour of knowledge that is assumed to have global utility. Part of that is the requirement to use English language (the language of the colonial master – Britain) as medium of Instruction; and the subordination of Fante – the indigenous language of the students – as a subject of study with lesser periods and its non-use as the medium of instruction. This opens a space for further exploration of the anti-colonial question concerning whose interest is served by the school curriculum in Ghana, and probably, other developing countries.

My proposition is that, the pedagogy and curriculum practices in school make students view school as a place where both a social gap and a knowledge gap exist between

them and teachers. They develop a binary concept of teachers as all-knowing authoritarian persons they must subordinate to; of themselves as knowing nothing – needing schooling, which resonates with the colonial notion of the teacher as educator who has a mandate to civilize students. The control mechanisms in school policy, the school timetable as a management tool and the code of discipline; and the monolithic universalising knowledge practices privileged by the delivered curriculum meant that becoming a student includes having organised conceptions of hierarchies and colonial schooling modes (authoritarian regulation) that were used to mould behaviour in colonised territories for centuries (Molteno et al., 2000).

In the specific case of Ghana, the formal school curriculum reproduces colonial school practices that have become ingrained, sustained and peddled by products of the colonial system who now manage Ghana's education system, and who, by their very training are less open to accept critical reforms. These practices have become the very characteristics that define school and schooling, which do not gain currency in the international regimes on education. Policy makers and researchers do not conduct critical review of the school curriculum. The effect is that school practices continue to retain authoritarian modes that promote fixed knowledge through the prescribed curricula. Students are regulated and become resigned to regulation. Although students remain in schooling with the view that it can make them become working class 'somebodies' (such as nurses, teachers, pharmacists etc.) some drop out because the institution promotes an attitude of subjugation - marginalisation of students' local knowledge, language and personal properties/competencies from the curriculum. On such grounds I would argue that school practices retain colonial modes of organisation, discipline and knowledge production, which typically position students as subjects to be taught and objects to be watched and examined, constantly.

8.2.2 Becoming 'nobodies': student identities in school

My second claim in this thesis is that, for the students involved in this study, being a student is synonymous with *being nobodies*. This claim addresses the third research

question: *What identities do students develop in relation to their experiences within regimes of power in school?*

The main ideas developed in Chapter Seven (and the two Chapters preceding it) highlight students' collective sense of *being nobodies* in relation to school policy and knowledge practices. The discussion in Chapter Seven highlights the ways in which regulation and control within school function to maintain broader social marginalities and transform students' identities from being 'somebodies' to 'nobodies'. It highlights how this identity of being nobodies is produced and reproduced within institutional regimes of power – hierarchical school organisation, school timetable as a management tool, school discipline and delivery modes of knowledge production - emanating from school policy texts, pedagogic practices and the main forms of discipline in the school.

One thread that flows through all three analyses' chapters is a perception of students as infantile members of the institution and 'subjects' to be oriented to particular standards of knowledge, religion and language as well as ways of behaving and acting. This makes the school a field where both power and knowledge are 'colonized'. By colonization, I mean violent regulation with little space for deviation (coloniality of power); imposition and reproduction of particular knowledges, linguistic competencies/literacies (coloniality of knowledge) and identities (coloniality of gender). The students' identities of *being nobodies* reflects 'coloniality of power' in terms of school organisation; in terms of decision making; and in terms of school discipline. Students were positioned lowest in school hierarchy, which in practice, implied that they have no power (discursive authority) to confront teacher authority. In terms of decision-making, the students felt that they were marginalised - their opinions are not sought on school administration. In terms of school discipline discussed in Chapter Five, students felt regulated at every move, every space and at every utterance; and were severely punished for deviation.

The students' identities of *being nobodies* reflect 'coloniality of knowledge' in terms of knowledge construction, where they were viewed as 'incompetents' in the general sense of teachers being all-knowing and transmitters of the 'esoteric' or 'valid' knowledge that curriculum authorities construct and deliver to the school. Students *being nobodies* are passive recipients of the prescribed knowledge delivered by teachers. 'Coloniality of gender' is reflected in both the institutionalised subordination of females, the dimorphic presentation of males and females during morning assembly and, in the inter-positional imbalances between students and teachers. There are other dimorphic relations such as juniors and seniors, prefects and non-prefects, over-age and not-overage.

As discussed in Chapter Seven, the students' 'collective' identities as *being nobodies* does not mean that the students are a homogenous group. It only reflects how they make sense of their 'collective experiences' as subjects of institutionalised regulation, although they recognise themselves in their different categories also as girls, boys, juniors and seniors, prefects, over-age, and others. In this case, critical anti-colonial perspectives about exploring collective histories and identities (Dei, 2004) seem more useful because *disabled* students and the *religious* 'others' as well as those who laugh at them, all see themselves as *being nobodies* in school. The female students who line-up in front at assembly and the boys who 'observed' from behind see themselves as *being nobodies* regulated to conform to school discipline. Although being *seniors-on-duty* implied authority to exercise control over *juniors* by writing names, both categories do not feel that they can oppose teacher authority. Overage students could not challenge their marginalisation from classroom discourse nor refuse to repeat classes. This speaks of Freire's idea of the submersion of students in the reality of oppression – the very structures of their thoughts are conditioned by the contradictions of the concrete, existential situation by which they were shaped such that their ideal was to adopt an attitude of "adhesion" (devotion) to the oppressor (Freire, 1993: 27).

The identities of *being nobodies* is therefore a narrative of marginalisation within regimes of power in institutional 'doings' and the position of school as a system that

controls everything. The discussions in the three analysis chapters highlighted that the critical factors involved in constructing student identities included: 'discursive framing' of behaviour; the public nature of classroom discipline; the linking of behaviour, learning and emotions; and the interactional complexities of passing as the 'proper child' within prevailing discourses of normal development, which embodied negative conception of students as a problem (MacLure et al., 2012:447). It speaks of the positioning of students within institutional regulation - early morning roll calls, silence period, school assembly and checking of attendance with official class register, classroom regulation and the use of caning as the main form of punishment. Within these discourses resonate intolerance of difference that also denies rights to free speech, treating students as a people without a language and the symbolic cutting off of their tongue if they spoke in their Indigenous language. It speaks of students as 'colonized subjects' - people denied a place as full members of the institution; people who are denied an identity, right to being, whether religious, cultural, social, or academic – through the overt and covert regimes of power in school that entangles and subdues the student to accept control and regulation.

8.2.3 Silence as a negotiation strategy

My third claim is that the students' main negotiation strategy is the use of silence as a form of passive resistance. This claim speaks to the fourth research question: *How do students negotiate their identities within the regimes of power in school?*

The discussion in Section 7.4 suggests that students adopt different negotiation strategies to navigate regulation and their identities of *being nobodies*. Over-age students 'acted tough'. Some 'resign' themselves to their regulation and 'dress up' for physical punishment. Some report to school late to avoid religious regulation while others 'rebel' by pretending to participate. Yet others draw on absenteeism. These strategies mainly involve 'silent' resistance, which attests to the realities of institutional colonisation with reference to domination and regulation to conform to dominant value systems (Lane et al., 2002). Despite that resisting through silence was "ultimately only stratagems that never succeeded in reversing the situation" (Rabinow, 1984:292) - it

was the most potent strategy available to the students. It is an emission on the boundaries of language that counters school authoritarianism. Students employ silence as a speech act to obstruct the work of analysis, making it difficult for teachers to form meaning that allows them to punish students.

My proposition is that silence also has other implications for society. It echoes arguments about the way schools in developing country contexts are organised – their authority patterns and forms of discipline - continue to perpetrate colonial relations of domination that were current many decades ago (Miller, 1990; Molteno et al, 2000; Harber, 2004). Silence as resistance, however, does not only locates students as ‘colonized subjects’; it works, cyclically, to reproduce students’ identities as *being nobodies*. It should draw our attention to important perspectives on children and violence, so aptly explored in the works of Parkes (2009). It lends credence to notions of schools as institutions where students experience violence (Parkes et al., 2013). Those students who cannot suffer in silence tend to drop out. This alerts us to arguments that EFA cannot be achieved in ex-colonies unless *deschooling* - decolonization of schools by addressing the historical traces of dehumanising authoritarian modes of control such as caning of children - occurred first (Illich, 1971; Dei, 2004). It signifies schools as sites of marginalisation and centre-periphery relationships; and draws our attention to the works of scholars who position schooling at the centre of discussions concerning gender, justice and international development (see the writings of Uzzell, 2005; Orr, 2004). It highlights the anti-colonial ontology of schools as ‘colonial’ institutions in terms of persisting relations of domination that impose and reproduce particular identities while occluding others; in terms of the persistence of certain forms of material, political and ideological interests of dominant economic and social forces (Dei, 2004) which students are not allowed to challenge. A salient point is that cultural repertoires of students and national needs such as the production of active citizens are side-stepped through the marginalising relations taking place at the school level. My proposition is that research practice which assigns discursive integrity to students’ accounts of institutional regimes may apply unorthodox

knowledge such as in this research to inform EFA policy-making and school improvement.

8.3 Implications of the findings and policy recommendations

It is difficult to make policy recommendations based on my research because it is largely a limited school-based study. However, the findings speak to the imperative for a critical review of school policies, ruling relations and knowledge practices to address the lingering effects of coloniality, although it would be foolhardy to make monolithic universalising recommendations. Nevertheless, being Ghanaian (as noted in the introduction to this thesis), I doubt that similar research in 'other' rural schools can significantly contradict the knowledge generated in this study. It is upon my wealth of experience of schooling in Ghana that I build on the findings of this research to make some policy claims. Analysis of the problems of schooling must include exploring the traces of history - forms of school organization, language of instruction and modes of discipline that tend to position students as 'nobodies'.

The findings that school is a place where students are regulated without deviation and the existence of caning as a form of punishment suggests persistence of authoritarian modes of school discipline that promote violence against children. This means, as the literature (Adjei, 2007) suggests, that education reforms, if they are to be truly successful, should carefully consider school discipline too. An important framework will be to discuss the nature of schools as child-friendly institutions that support and nurture potential. The results from cross country research analyses in Ghana, Kenya and Mozambique hold lots of promise on some of the steps to developing a child-friendly school environment (see Parkes & Heslop, 2011; Parkes et al., 2013). In particular, however, caning suggests that global pathways to abolishing physical punishment are not integrated into teacher training in alternative behaviour modification techniques aimed at realizing children's rights in Ghana (Durrant & Smith, 2011). The term behaviour modification is based on the principle that rewarding appropriate behaviour is more effective than punishing inappropriate behaviour. This strategy also involves using simple verbal reinforces such as 'good job' and 'I believe you can solve this task'.

This helps to reinforce good behaviour, which becomes intrinsically motivated. It makes the students feel good and develop positive self-image too. The teachers' non-use of these positive ways of intervening with challenging behaviour implies a need to provide pre-service and in-service training on positive behaviour modification techniques.

The students' conception of themselves as *being nobodies* generates a "discourse of directions" (Schostak, 2002:107). It exemplifies that schooling is largely implicated in the production of docile citizens; and calls attention to the role of school in reproducing social inequalities. The denial of religious freedom is salient - it reveals how the institution of schooling teaches students to be intolerant of differences including the denial of fundamental rights to some. This is in contradiction to Chapter Five of Ghana's 1992 Constitution, which entrenches religious freedom as a fundamental right of all citizens. Similarly, the views of disabilities as a marker of wickedness also deflates efforts by the Ghanaian government that culminated in the production of a Disability Act, 2006 (Act 715). Contrary to the provisions of the Act, little provision is made to support disabled students in school. The point for our attention is that more action is required if students are to benefit from the provisions in Ghana's Children's Act, 1998, Act 560.

In terms of the curriculum, *being nobodies* presents an ideological critique of the pedagogic practices employed in classroom interactions. It points to the discursive practices available to students. It speaks of how the prescribed curriculum positions students as 'incompetent' to act; less knowledgeable recipients of pre-determined knowledge; and subjects of teacher control. These issues raise question of curriculum development processes and co-construction of knowledge in the classroom. The denigration of local language as a language of instruction relates to curriculum relevance. It means that students in early learning classrooms (aged 4 – 8) also have to think and process information in a foreign language (English Language). Pryor and Ampiah's (2003) analyses have informed us that learning in English limited students' participation in school lessons. I have argued that this is because the students have less English Language capital – meaning of words/concepts, fluency of expression,

mechanical accuracy and understandings of English cultural and epistemological codes. I have also argued that the legislation of English language as a medium of instruction; the allocation of more teaching time to instruction in English language; and the production of teaching syllabi and learning materials in English language; as well as the promotion of English language literacy as a measure of good education, has always implied something more serious – the reciprocal denigration of local language and a disparagement of students' cultural identity. The implication is not so much the de-identification with the knowledge that is being produced in school (Dei, 2004). As I have said in Section 8.2.2, the cumulative effect is like rupturing the student from his cultural being; or an attempt to separate the foetus from the umbilical cord in the mother's womb; it is to be expected to exist without an identity. This calls for attention to critical review of the school curriculum to address the broader question of whose interests are being served by the curriculum. This review obviously would have to take a critical look at the question of language of instruction.

The finding that students use silence as their main negotiation strategy for resistance has important messages. It suggests denial of students' rights to democratic engagement (the rights to be included socially and intellectually as active members) in the school. This suggests the need to explore how schools can be (re)organised to promote democratic engagements among the principal actors – teachers and students. The effect of silence as a form of resistance, I would argue, is withdrawal from mutual engagement. This would negate the development of democratic values expected of active citizens. As I have often argued in this research, this strategy tumbles into anti-colonial theoretical construction that traces of the colonial school curriculum organisation persists in developing country contexts (Molteno et al., 2000). Furthermore, that unless efforts are made to address such control and reproduction of knowledge, the implications for education and development goals is dropping out and silent exclusions that threaten the achievement of EFA in the long term. For the larger society, schools perpetuate rather than challenge existing social inequalities such as gender role stratifications and violent relations that may denigrate the role of schools as institutions that can contribute to the development of democratic values.

In reference to the persistence of colonial practices in school, and the spirit of present day human rights values, I would recommend a *project of school decolonisation*. This implies reframing understandings of student-teacher relations; re-orienting school policy to respect democratic values of participation, free speech and respect for difference; and respecting knowledge production practices that allow different forms of “producing and transmitting knowledge that can coexist and complement each other” (Castro-Gomez, 2007:444). The consequences of not implementing this project of decolonisation is to sustain the persisting colonial system with its attendant authoritarianism; intolerance for difference; and denial of indigeneity, all of which have consequences for EFA and the production of active citizens imbued with democratic values systems. In terms of research, the *project of school decolonisation* would also mean considering how to produce knowledge in ways that are not determined by established methodologies and epistemological practices. The works of Patience Elabor-Idemudia (2002) and James J. Scheurich (1997) and Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) have already provided ample critiques of the dominant range of research epistemologies - positivism to postmodernisms, post structuralisms. Scheurich (1997:141) particularly argued that these have “negative results for the people of colour in general and scholars of colour in particular” because these epistemologies “arise out of the social history and culture of the dominant race, [and] ... reflect and reinforce that social history and that social group”. Spoonley (1995) particularly disagreed with this critique, but as Elabor-Idemudia (2002:231) suggests, the problem is not with the validity of these established epistemologies: it is a question of “How is it possible to decolonize (social) research in/on the non-Western developing countries to ensure that the people’s human condition is not constructed through Western hegemony and ideology?” Smith (2012:1-2) further adds that

these methodologies exclude from knowledge production the knowledge systems of formerly colonized, historically marginalized, and oppressed groups, which today are most often represented as Other and fall under broad categories of non-Western, third world, developing, underdeveloped, First Nations, indigenous peoples, third world women, African American women, and so on.

Mita (1993) also described post-colonialism as ‘incapable’ of presenting a “truer description of what influences the arts and politic in the ... world” of people living in ex-

colonies because, it seeks to direct our attention to 'post-colonial' as if colonisation is a finished business. Smith (1998:14), writing from New Zealand, supports this viewpoint:

Naming the world as 'post-colonial' is, from indigenous perspectives, to name colonization as 'finished business'. According to many indigenous perspectives the term post-colonial can only mean one thing; the colonizers have left. There is rather compelling evidence that this has not in fact occurred.

Mita and the scholars in the immediate preceding paragraphs prefer anti-colonialism as research epistemology for ex-colonies. I would rather proffer a critical anti-colonial discursive framework (CADF) (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001). Like anti-colonialism, the CADF takes the impact of coloniality as its ontological starting point but does **not** blame colonialism for the problems in developing countries (Dei, 2004, 2006). Its epistemological approach recognises the legacies of colonialism, and questions their implications for society (Dei & Kempf, 2006; Viruru, 2005; Angod, 2006). In analysing schooling, the CADF would question public regimes on education, institutional relations, forms of discipline and knowledge practices; and refer back to how these regimes serve deferring interests. I recommend this approach (which I reflect more upon in section 8.6.1 of this chapter) because it also situates knowledge in the social and historical experiences of the people located in the context being studied.

8.4 Contribution of the thesis

What do we know about student experiences and perspectives of schooling in developing country contexts that are relevant to the 'big debates' concerning EFA? The main contribution of this thesis is that it brings students' perspectives to the fore to inform debates on schooling and development. We know much from the existing scholarly research but we know little about student experiences: how they see themselves within school, why they stay, and how they are negotiating the existential conditions of everyday schooling. It is in this area that my thesis adds substantially to the literature.

Whereas minimalist research generally takes off with an idea of schooling as an objective good, this study deviates by highlighting school as a field of regulation where

students' experiences are nested with persisting colonial forms of regulation, discipline forms and performance modes of knowledge production. It provides strong evidence that persisting colonial school regimes – authoritarian forms of control and reproduction of knowledge are implicated in the educational experiences of students and the identities they negotiate within the institution. This study highlights the ways in which formal institutional regimes (authoritarian school organisation, school timetable as a management tool and the school code of discipline) organise student experiences of schooling. It also highlights the reproduction of knowledge through the delivered curriculum and performance modes of teaching and learning. It highlights that students see themselves as *being 'nobodies'* such that their 'best' agency is to use silence as an agentic 'voice'. It highlights the ways in which the student identities of *being nobodies* is produced and reproduced within institutional regimes of control and reproduction of knowledge.

Despite Ghana's long attained independence, my thesis of the student identities of *being 'nobodies'* asserts that there has been little critical review of bequeathed colonial school practices. By practices, I mean specifically: authoritarian organization; discipline forms; and, performance modes of knowledge production that position students as 'colonised subjects'. Based on the central analysis of this research, I assert that the student identities of *being nobodies* traduce the development possibilities of schooling. My proposition is that further research into student experiences within school regimes and their learner identities can inform the 'big debates' central to EFA.

8.5 Recommendations for further research on student experiences

From the experience of this thesis, there is no reason to think that what the students told me were figments of their imaginations or personal illusions. I heard 'words from their hearts' (Mander, 2010). I saw children weeping as they talked to me. Their narratives (which were mostly confirmed by teachers and crosschecked with my personal experiences as a Ghanaian) provide knowledge that adds substantially to our understanding of school practices. Further research on students' perspectives will offer, as Adjei (2007) suggests, possibilities for charting educational change in which

inclusion and inclusiveness are seen as paramount. Their perspectives helped me to understand that school organisation, code of discipline and curriculum practices have implications for learner identities. Since then I have been thinking about three important questions: How are school practices (structural and cultural relations) implicated in reproducing social violence? How does this violence harm students and our education goals? What are the options for decolonising schooling in postcolonial contexts? Such questions require complementary research methodologies that explore students' 'voice' and diverse perspectives to add value to orthodox policy research. Exploration of students' voice would add value because, research will become reflexively critical in producing texts which accurately represents the world that has been researched from the perspectives of people distinctively experiencing the implementation of educational policy at the school level (Usher, 1996).

This study is a school-based ethnographic case study that does not represent all schools. I used a critical case sample of students because I was more concerned about depth than breadth. As such, the research did not cover a large population of students in the study school. It is limited, therefore, by being context specific and more contingent on the experiences of the critical case sample. The implication is that the findings cannot be generalised, and, the results cannot be used to produce a monolithic or universalising theory of what is happening in other Ghanaian schools. This does not mean that the findings are not worthwhile. The findings do present important messages. It provides vital information that can inform further exploration of in-school factors and broader policy issues that affect the achievement of EFA. Researchers interested in educational access, transitions, equity and outcomes can try-out similar research in schools on a micro or major scale. It provides a point of take-off for education policy researchers interested in understanding students' perspectives on school discipline and classroom practices; and teacher-student relations. Researchers and policy makers concerned about student identities, and in creating rights respecting schools, may build on the findings of this research to initiate further research. Finally, the findings from this research provide arguments that human capital theorists may like to debunk. Three questions are pertinent – How does the notion of schooling as a

given good benefit academic ‘failures’? How does the good of schooling address the epistemic effects on other cultures and languages? How do we address the concerns about hierarchies of knowledge as well as the violations of students within school?

A deficit in this research is that it does not provide the range of data required to understand how to make teachers and students build “a shared repertoire” and “mutual engagements” within school (Wenger, 1998:73). As such, further research is required to understand how students want school to be. Key questions may include: How can a joint enterprise of school members address the epistemological and social gaps between teachers and students? How can this joint enterprise be constructed and achieved? What are the relationships students want to have with teachers and how can this provide space for democratic engagement? This would require further sociologically grounded research into the interface between students’ roles as learners and teachers’ position in the delivered curriculum as givers of knowledge.

In the specific case of Ghana, this study begins analysis that asks for further research into the role of students’ voice in the national curriculum. This is important in order to understand the deficits in educational programming and school reforms. We need further research to understand the ‘curriculum of the future’, which Young (1999) described as a curriculum that supports the creation of new knowledge, the interdependence of knowledge and allows teachers and students to question the knowledge that is produced and reproduced in school. The knowledge and insights from such critical studies, as Mander (2010) suggested, can be invaluable in the design and evaluation of public policy aimed at securing more equitable education for students, especially those in rural communities. It will help society to re-think the role of schools in producing citizens that actively serve democratic agendas, and to address institutional regimes that have implications for EFA policy. These regimes include authoritarian school organization; discipline forms; and, performance modes of knowledge production that position students as ‘colonised subjects’.

8.6 Reflections

This section presents my reflections on the theoretical and the methodology approach used in the thesis' research process. The section is artificial because I have variously expressed my reflections from the beginning of the text of this thesis. The theoretical reflection is focused on the lessons I learnt from using critical anti-colonial theory. The methodological reflection, on the other hand, is focused on the learnings from using institutional ethnography.

8.6.1 Theoretical reflections

The critical anti-colonial discursive framework (CADF) can be uncritically dismissed as anti-Western because it critiques modes of western domination. However, it led me to explore and to highlight the dangers of institutional colonisation and how schooling discourses in developing countries are constrained within hegemonic centrist systems of world politics (Dei, 2004). The CADF led me through different journeys – historical, theoretical and experiential. The historical journey involved exploration of mosaic of theoretical and empirical literature to uncover an aggregate of mini-dramas and countervailing discourses (Schostak, 2002) including the education debates of the 1960s and 1970s to understand the strands of intellectual history behind schooling and the original purpose of the institution. Those histories congeal around organizing images, some of which aspire to a dominant view through which they are told, a vision of the future promoted and a plan of action for the present rationally constructed. Others challenge those histories and led me to explore student experiences as the autobiographical histories of their difficulties, failures, battles within school.

The challenge in using the CADF resides in uncovering human experience. As Rubenson (2011:115) noted, uncovering the significance of experience requires contextualizing it “within the particular political, cultural and societal circumstances ... in particular parts of the world”. As in chapter three, I needed to contextualise the research by exploring the historical origins of schooling in Ghana. This historiological analysis took me to the origins of the modern institution of schooling, and missionary roots of formal education in Ghana.

The theoretical journey required applying many spatial theories in a nested way. In the case of this research, I drew from aspects of postcolonial theory (Foucault, 1977), coloniality theory (Illich, 1971; Said, 1978; Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001; Mignolo, 2007), social reproduction (Bourdieu, 1990) and critical pedagogy (Freire, 1993; Giroux, 2004). Applying these theories was a journey through vast sea, in which the ‘puzzles’ (Dunne et al., 2005b) radically changed me from functionalist to critical perspectives. From my own research experience, I became attached to the view that traces of colonial school regimentation in Ghana have sedimented and remained largely intractable (Dei, 2004). As the analysis chapters suggested, power relations in the school are fixed with states of domination in which students could not challenge teacher authority. Students’ agency – using silence as strategy for resistance - reflects the unbalanced possession of power “that never succeeded in reversing the situation” (Rabinow, 1984:292). They remained unquestioningly obedient to school rules and regulated their colleagues to do so, because of introjected identities and applied orientations (Bernstein, 2000:60) that the teacher cannot be reported to anyone. In particular, the control over students is fixed such that, from the data in Chapter Five, prefects are constrained to act as what Freire (1993:27) described as “sub-oppressors” or instruments through which the hierarchies of power are further imposed at every level of students’ interaction within the school. So, anti-colonial theorisations provided a more sound theoretical space to explore schools as locations of power, which quintessentially “underline its hegemonic status” (Münkler, 2005:57).

As Dei argued, the CADF does not ignore disparagement of indigeneity and its embodied knowledge. These ideas provide a space to analyse coloniality of knowledge or *prescription* of certain knowledge as better (Freire, 1993:29). It provided the most appropriate theoretical pathway to exploring the knowledge-power relations in curriculum practice. It provided a reason and background to explore how powerful groups control discourses of education through a delivered curriculum that makes both teachers and students become constrained actors in school. The CADF provided a

space to re-examine beneath the surface of Bernstein's notion of performance mode as the most productive form of knowledge production, which presents knowledge as fixed.

In using the CADF, I realised that the deficit of postcolonial theory is its emphasis on human agency through "individualized renditions and interpretations of experience" (Prah, 1997:16; Dei, 2004:258). Rather than privilege agency, the experience of anti-colonial theory taught me that a full account of school power relations and identities should acknowledge the disproportionate concentration of power in institutional hierarchies, and the role of institutional configurations (both structural and cultural) in maintaining power relations and, in shaping group identities. In reference to students' institutional positioning, anti-colonial theory provides a pathway for exploring student identities. It offered an entry point to explore how students became resigned to teacher authority and the structures of domination in which they were immersed. Anti-colonial theory became very useful when students emphasized identity of *being nobodies*, which speaks to their collective powerlessness within school.

In comparing the practices of the colonial schooling culture as discussed in Chapter Three with those I observed on the field, I maintain that anti-colonial theory is the most useful theoretical framework. As noted earlier, the school was hierarchically organised in ways that relegated students to the margins in decision making. When I listened to narratives of how indigenous knowledge, language and culture were marginalised in the school curriculum, the anti-colonial discursive framework which challenges cultural epistemicides and acknowledges the political economy of knowledge production (Dei, 2004; Said, 1978) stipulates the pathway within which such issues are appropriately discussed.

One utility of anti-colonial discursive framework is its view of schooling in developing countries as constrained within hegemonic centrist systems of world politics (Dei, 2004) where the implementation of supposedly good global education policies such as FCUBE with its human capital promises are not critically questioned. Therefore, in terms of school relations, the CADF allowed the exploration of the school as sites

where the negotiations taking place can either strengthen or weaken possibilities for change (Epstein, 1993:157). From the data, the possibilities that can become weakened by students' struggles in school are the efforts to achieve UBE/UPC and EFA goals by the year 2015 and beyond. Unlike functionalist discourses, the CADF provides space to explore how national needs are side-stepped in the school curriculum because it is constructed to serve the interest of globalisation and that in developing countries whatever promises to increase wealth, productivity and technological innovation receives little critical reflection (Reinicke, 1998).

The CADF also helped in 'reading' and interpreting the data and the acts that unfolded in the field. It underlined how I 'gave voice' to students during interviews, observations and in the construction of the text so that I do not colonise the research process. It helped me, for example, to read students' silence as a product of "the ways in which they appraise and make sense of violence" ... and the same time as a sign of how a child is "caught up in cycles of violence in which she/he is powerless" (Parkes, 2009:741). This reading of silence is itself fraught with dangers of misrepresentation. So, I constantly asked process questions including: How does this act of silence reflect students' status as members of the institutions? What does it say about the relationships with other interlocutors including myself? What assumptions underlie the refusal to respond to the particular question?

Overall, the choice of anti-colonial theory made me reject minimalist research trends: the academic trends that resist critical discussions of the relationship between education and development in developing countries including Ghana. It led me to institutional ethnography, which allowed me to explore the regions of relations in school and how the institution is employed as a tool for social control. It provided a 'mirror' for understanding how power is not exterior to knowledge production or to social relations but is embedded within their very conditions of 'existence' (Usher, 1996:128; Dunne et al., 2005b:49). It allowed me to address how student experiences reflect back to questions of marginalities - centre-periphery relations, and to explain how the localised students' voices are linked back (and forth) to broader hierarchical social relations.

8.6.2 Methodological reflections

The epistemological approach to this research is a significant departure from minimalist and dominant minimalist approaches that privilege positivistic research and resists critical discussions of the relationship between education and development. The encounter with institutional ethnography led me to a grounded analysis of schools as institutions organised by rules and ruling relations that have serious effects on the minds, thoughts and actions of people within the institution. In adopting institutional ethnography, I became aware that peaceful school policies and institutional ethos have far more implications than I ever thought. So, I needed to deconstruct the institutional practices in detail. As institutional ethnography concerns itself more with ruling relations the regulation of social practices in the school became a necessary imperative to explore. Part of that requirement was to explore the ways movements and access to spaces was controlled within the institution.

As I stated in Chapter Four, institutional ethnography is eclectic - not essentially concerned about the dichotomy between qualitative and quantitative research although it gets assigned to qualitative methods (DeVault, 1999; Smith, 2005). What it challenges is methodological minimalism – it relies on in-depth exploration, writing rich descriptions and explications of institutions as organizers of our everyday lives. It explores complex interactions (structural and cultural, formal and informal, stated and unstated, sayable and the unsayable, visible and invisible aspects of schooling). This has implications for researchers desiring to use institutional ethnography. The major challenge is epistemological – where to draw the boundaries of the case study, what to include and what to exclude, and thus, what is the claim to knowledge that is being made (Stark & Torrance, 2005:34).

From my experience, institutional ethnographers must be careful to know exactly what the focus of the research is in order to avoid issues not relevant to the particular objectives set. Drawing the boundaries is not straightforward and involves crucial decisions – informed in different ways by different disciplinary assumptions (Stark & Torrance, 2005:34). For example, one thing to note is that institutions have histories

and memories manifested through the understandings and actions of individuals – policies impinge on practice, teachers do not just ‘choose’ what to teach and how to teach it (Stark & Torrance, 2005). Similarly, understandings of what schools or other institutions are for are generated in particular social and historical circumstances, as are our understandings of the nature of professionalism and the proper role for teachers. This reliance on situating knowledge within experience allowed me to explore both the marginal and central issues that place a hold on students within school. Institutional ethnographers thus need to design a case study that pays attention to the social and historical context of actions within the institution and the action itself (Stark & Torrance, 2005). The central importance of texts in the analysis of schooling, for example, explores how the ruling relations within school are connected to public pedagogy that constrains both teachers and students. This salient characteristic of institutional ethnography connects it as a methodology that worked well with the CADF because both challenge relations of domination and marginalities.

It helped to explore the structural limitations on people, question marginalities and give voice to students. However, that raised the question of how I went about giving voice to students. As a sociological research methodology, institutional ethnography requires acknowledgment and deconstruction of how power relations in research processes could colonise knowledge. The point is that institutional ethnography demands questioning authorial visibility so that data from the field is not moderated during the analysis. I clarified that in Chapter Five where I explained my ethical and reflexive practices. I needed to constantly guard my personal beliefs and experiences from clouding the data and discussions. I often asked myself: Does the reader get a sense that this data is actually coming from the participants? This was why the issues of ethics and reflexivity became highlighted so much in this research. I need to show that the entire research process was reflexively critical and the text accurately represents the world that has been researched (Usher, 1996).

The intersections of institutional ethnography and CADF were also useful in terms of ethical practice. As Daniluk and Haverkamp (1993:17) suggested, protecting the

students “against incompetence and unwarranted risks is critical to all ethical practice but takes on additional importance” when they described themselves as *being nobodies*. Their identities as *being nobodies* suggested to me that “they have experienced severe breaches in control over their lives and bodies” (Daniluk & Haverkamp, 1993:18). So, it was my task to build trust as described in Chapter Four because people who experience severe control over their lives “characteristically experience difficulties with trust ... based on their early experiences of profound betrayal”. I needed to empower the students with an acknowledgement that their memories may also have been repressed. I could not interview students without the mention of repressed memories which they might have formed over their schooling years as a way of protecting “themselves from psychological disintegration through repression of memories and emotional dissociation” (Daniluk & Haverkamp, 1993:18). As discussed in Chapter Four, I needed to share some experiences of my days as a primary school child in order to identify with them. From all these, I have come to learn that our research practice needs to be informed by good knowledge of the historical, the existential as well as the experiential circumstances of our research participants.

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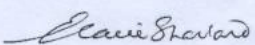
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Appendix 1

Ethical Clearance from the University of Sussex



University of Sussex

Social Sciences Cluster-based Research Ethics Committee CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL	
Reference Number:	1011/04/05
School:	ESW
Title of Project	EXPERIENCES OF SCHOOLING: CHILDREN'S ACCOUNTS OF SCHOOL REGIMES AND STUDENT IDENTITIES
Principal Investigator: (Supervisor as applicable)	Vincent Adzahlie Mensah (Dunne/Novelli)
Expected Start Date:*	1 October 2011
<p><small>*NB. If the actual project start date is delayed beyond 12 months of the <u>expected</u> start date, this Certificate of Approval will lapse and the project will need to be reviewed again to take account of changed circumstances such as legislation, sponsor requirements and University procedures</small></p>	
<p>This project has been given ethical approval by the Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (C-REC). Please note the following requirements for approved submissions:</p> <p>Amendments to research proposal - Any changes or amendments to the approved proposal, which have ethical implications, must be submitted to the committee for authorisation prior to implementation.</p> <p>Feedback regarding any adverse and unexpected events - Any adverse (undesirable and unintended) and unexpected events that occur during the implementation of the project must be reported to the Chair of the Social Sciences C-REC. In the event of a serious adverse event, research must be stopped immediately and the Chair alerted within 24 hours of the occurrence.</p>	
Authorised Signature	
Name of Authorised Signatory (C-REC Chair or nominated deputy)	Dr Elaine Sharland 22 July 2011

Appendix 2

Clearance from the Ministry of Education



University of Sussex

Centre for International Education

Brighton, Falmer

March 3, 2011

Dear Sir,

Application for clearance to proceed with fieldwork

I am a Lecturer at the University of Education, Winneba and now reading for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Sussex. My proposed research is designed to investigate the schooling experiences of Basic School. The proposed title of the study is: ***Experiences of Schooling: Children's Accounts of School Regimes and Identities.***

The research seeks to explore four key questions:

- What are the students' perspectives on schooling?
- What practices within the school define the students' perspectives on schooling?
- What identities do the students construct within the regulatory practices of everyday school life?
- How are students negotiating their identities within the school?

The research is designed as a qualitative case study using ethnographic processes of sustained interaction interviewing, observing everyday activities and, possibly analysing document. I intend to focus particularly on students' in-school experiences by exploring their perspectives in order to add to the existing body of school-based research in Ghana. It is hoped that the research will help address some of the gaps in access research which has led the MOE to, suggest a need for "further studies" to identify and address the underpinning conditions of high non-completion rates (2010, p.23). I will work with selected P4-P5 children in a rural Basic School within the Effutu Municipal Education District.

I am writing to ask for your permission as a requirement for approval here in the University of Sussex to proceed with the field work. You may revert to my supervisor, Dr. Mairead Dunne at mairead.dunne@sussex.ac.uk , or 0044-1273-877266 in case of doubts.

I count on your kind consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Vincent Adzahlie-Mensah
DPhil Student

*In case of reply the
number and date of this
letter*

My Ref No

Your Ref No



**Ministry of Education
Ministry Branch Post Office
P. O. Box M. 45
Accra**

15th March, 2010

To Whom It May Concern

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT FIELDWORK

This is to acknowledge that Mr. Vincent Adzahlie-Mensah who is studying for the Doctor of Philosophy degree at the University of Sussex has the consent of the Ministry of Education to carry out field work in EDUCATION as part of his doctoral research project.

He is a member of staff of the University of Education, Winneba on study leave and is researching on **Children's Experiences of Schooling**.

The Ministry of Education appreciates the need to unearth this promising area of knowledge, especially, at the foundation level of education – an area that has been less explored over the years. We are optimistic that the results of the research will significantly contribute not only to helping us and other stakeholders in education to i) understand some of the challenges that impede our EFA goals better, but also ii) to aid the Ministry of Education to take other important policy decisions that may go a long way to improve education delivery at the Basic level of education, in particular.

The Ministry, therefore, has no objection to allowing the applicant access to our schools in Ghana to conduct the research.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Paul Kofi Krampah'.

**PAUL KOFI KRAMPAH (MR.)
DEPUTY DIRECTOR, PUBLIC RELATIONS,
OFFICE OF THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION,
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ACCRA – GHANA.**

Appendix 3

Information Sheet for read out top participants

Information sheet for research participants

Dear student, I am student at the University who is finding out how schooling can be improved for all children in Ghana. I need you to talk to me about your experiences in school and do hope that the information you give me will help to better understand the needs of you and your friends and youths like you in Ghana. The rules of my University do not allow me to tell any other person about what we will be discussing. The information you give will be confidential and will only be used for my research purposes. I am not allowed to not mention your name in my final report; and so, it will not be possible to link information back to you in any way. Therefore, your teachers, parents and other students will not know what we will be discussing. However, your safety is concern to me and the nation. Section 2 of the Juvenile Justice Act requires that the Welfare principle of “The best interest of a child” should be “the primary consideration by a juvenile court, institution or any other body in a matter concerned with a child”. So, I am obliged by the laws of Ghana (the Domestic Violence Act, 2007 and the Children’s Act, 1998) and international research standards to take steps to protect you if any information you give me indicates that you at risk of significant harm. In such circumstances, I am obliged to ensure that ONLY those who can offer you the best form of protection may hear anything you tell me.

It is my duty to inform the Department of Social Welfare or the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit of the Ghana Police Service where I observe or receive information of incidents that represent a danger to your welfare and safety. For example, the Children’s Act requires that, “Any person with information on

(a) child abuse; or

(b) a child in need of care and protection shall report the matter ...” to the Department of Social Welfare.

These bodies are, by law, responsible for protecting children from any form of harm. They may even advice or give you counselling on how to deal with some of your present challenges.

It is important for you to know that research procedures and Ghana’s Criminal Code require that any action I will take to protect you will be done with professional advice to not put you at risk of any harm or danger. For example, Ghana’s laws and research standards of my University require that everything I do with the information you give me should serve your best interest. For example, During the research period, you may contact me on 020-8356070 to give me any new information if they wish to do so. When I am away in my University in the United Kingdom, you may contact me on 0044-7926120237. All I want from you is that, please be truthful with your answers. Please, you are completely free to not participate and to withdraw later if you choose to participate. I will need your verbal consent that you are willingly accepting to participate in the research. You are also free to ask me any questions you may have concerning my research and your participation.

Appendix 4

Sample Class register

[illegible]

7TH WEEK						8TH WEEK						9TH WEEK					
MONTH:						MONTH:						MONTH:					
DATE	13	14	15	16	17	DATE	20	21	22	23	24	DATE	27	28	29	30	31
M	T	W	T	F	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	0	1	1	1	31	1	1	1	1	1	36	1	1	1	1	1	440
1	1	1	1	1	33	1	1	1	1	1	38	1	1	1	1	1	442
1	1	1	1	1	21	1	1	1	1	1	26	1	0	1	1	1	329
0	1	0	0	0	15	0	0	0	0	0	15	1	1	1	1	1	419
0	1	0	0	0	15	0	0	0	0	0	15	0	1	1	1	1	318
1	1	1	1	1	24	1	1	1	1	0	33	1	1	1	1	1	437
1	0	0	1	1	23	1	1	1	1	1	28	1	1	1	1	1	432
1	0	1	1	1	30	1	1	1	1	1	35	1	1	1	1	1	439
0	0	1	0	1	16	0	0	0	0	0	16	1	1	1	1	1	420
0	1	1	1	1	31	1	1	1	1	1	36	1	1	1	1	1	440
0	1	1	1	0	31	1	1	1	1	1	36	1	1	1	1	1	440
1	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	16
1	1	1	1	1	23	1	1	1	1	1	28	1	1	1	1	1	437
1	0	1	0	1	19	1	1	1	1	1	24	0	1	1	1	1	327
1	1	1	1	1	30	1	1	1	1	1	37	1	1	1	1	1	441
1	1	1	1	1	33	1	1	1	1	1	38	1	0	1	1	1	341
1	1	1	1	1	29	1	1	1	1	1	34	1	1	1	1	1	438
1	1	1	1	1	29	1	1	1	1	1	34	0	1	1	1	1	381
1	0	1	0	1	26	1	1	1	1	1	31	1	1	1	1	1	438
1	1	1	1	1	32	1	1	1	1	1	35	1	1	1	1	1	341
1	1	1	1	1	33	0	1	1	1	1	37	1	1	1	1	1	441
1	1	1	1	0	82	1	1	1	1	1	37	0	1	1	1	1	340
1	1	1	1	1	32	1	1	1	1	1	37	1	1	1	1	1	441
0	0	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	12	0	1	1	1	1	315
1	0	0	0	0	14	1	0	1	1	1	21	1	0	1	1	1	324
0	1	0	0	0	14	0	0	1	1	1	20	1	1	1	1	1	424
1	1	1	0	1	18	1	1	1	1	1	23	1	1	1	1	1	427
1	1	1	1	1	32	1	1	1	1	1	38	1	1	1	1	1	442

Appendix 5

School timetable

UPPER PRIMARY TIMETABLE						
	8.15-9.15	9.15-10.15		10.45-11.45	11.45-12.15	
MON	MATHS	P.E		ENGLISH	ICT	
TUE	ENGLISH	MATHS		INT. SCIENCE	GHANAIAN LANG.	
WED	WORSHIP	GHANAIAN LANG.		MATHS	ENGLISH	
THU	MATHS	ENGLISH		ENGLISH READING (LIBRARY)	CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION	
FRI	P.E	MATHS		ENGLISH READING (LIBRARY)	GHANAIAN LANG.	
LOWER PRIMARY TIMETABLE						
	8.15-9.15	9.15-10.15		10.45-11.45	11.45-12.15	
MON	P.E	MATHS		ENGLISH	CREATIVE ARTS	
TUE	MATHS	ENGLISH		NATURAL SCIENCE	GHANAIAN LANG.	
WED	WORSHIP	MATHS		ENGLISH	ENGLISH READING (LIBRARY)	
THU	ENGLISH	MATHS		R.M.E	ICT	
FRI	MATHS	P.E		ENGLISH READING (LIBRARY)	R.M.E	

Appendix 6: Research Instruments

SCHOOL AND CLASSROOM OBSERVATION GUIDE

Date:

Time First teacher reported

Time first pupil reported:

Time Last teacher reported

A. Early morning activities:

<i>Student activities</i>
<i>Teacher activities</i>
<i>Special events</i>

B. Practices during special periods

Break time
Library period
Physical Education period
Other special times (eg school worship)

C. Modes of disciplining in the school

D. Teacher-student interactions outside the classroom

E. Student-student interactions outside the classroom

F. General use of instructional hours

G. Other events

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

Class code:

Subject:

Introductory activities
Instructional materials and how they were used
Mode of lesson delivery
Nature of student classroom participation (Eg. asking questions)
Do all children receive similar attention from the teacher
Distribution of questions
Teacher's disposition to students (E. g. Receptiveness to students questions, reactions to behaviours)
Modes of disciplining practiced in the classroom
Special attention to students with disability
Students-student engagement during lesson delivery (E.g. Are there students who appeared to be shunned or intimidated by other students?)
The regulatory practices in the classroom (E. g. Observe gestures, classifications, verbal commands and physical restraints and others)
Language of instruction and reactions to language difficulties
Summing up
Special events
General description of classroom atmosphere

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Date of interview:	
ID number:	
Grade	

I will like us to discuss a few things about school which will help to make schools to be the way students would want it. I decided to talk to you because you agreed to share your experiences with me and because you have been in this school for the past XXX years. I do not know anyone in this school and how things are done here. I will need you to be sincere and tell me the truth so that you and other children can enjoy schooling now and in the future. You remember we agreed that your teachers, parents and other students will know what we will discuss. You are free to refuse to answer any particular question you do not want to answer. I will be glad to listen to any concerns you may have at this and any other time. Do I have your permission to start our discussion?

Introductory discussions

1. Whom are you living with?
2. How many siblings do you have?
3. What languages do you speak at home?
4. What language do you speak at school?
5. What do you do in your spare time?
6. Do you have friends at school?
7. When did you start primary one? (year).....

What are the students' perspectives on schooling?

1. How do students describe school and why?
2. What are their likes and dislikes about schools?
3. Why do students like or dislike particular practices within school?
4. What are students' views on school and classroom relations?
5. How do students get on with teachers at school?
6. How do students get on with other students?
7. Do students feel that all students are treated equally? Why?
8. What challenges do you face at school and how do those make you feel about schooling?
What or how would students want school to be like?

What practices within the school define the students' perspectives on schooling?

1. How is the school structured?
2. What are the practices in the school?
3. What are the practices within classroom?
4. What are the regulatory practices within school and classroom?
5. What are the modes of discipline within the school?
6. What are formal rules and regulations in the school?
7. What are the informal rules in the school?
8. What are the students required to do at school outside the classroom?
9. What do students do before classes begin?
10. What happens during morning assembly?
11. What do students do during break time?
12. How is library period used?
13. How is physical education period used?
14. Who ensures that students do what they are required to do?
15. What do the students do within classroom?
16. What does the teacher do during lessons?
17. What is the language of instruction?
18. How does the language of instruction affect student classroom participation?
19. How do other students behave in class? Why
20. What are the rules in the school?
21. When is one considered to have broken a school rule?
22. Who determines whether one has broken a rule?
23. What options do students have if they are suspected of breaking a rule?
24. How are school rules and regulations enforced?
25. What happens if a student breaks a school rule?
26. What are the modes of discipline within the school?
27. What happens if a student reports to school late?
28. How is a student treated if s/he reports to class late?
29. How is corporal punishment administered in the school?

What identities do the students construct in their relations within the regulatory practices of everyday school life?

1. How do students see themselves as members of the school and classroom as a result of the school's practices?
2. How do the way students feel about schools practices affect school and classroom participation?
3. Do students feel that they are free to participate in any activity in the school?
4. Do students feel free to express their views in class?
5. Do the students feel that they are free to report other students who are intimidating?
6. Do the students feel that they can report a teacher who is intimidating? Why?
7. Do students make friends at school and why?
8. How many friends do students have?
9. If students have a secret will they tell anyone at school?
10. Do students feel lonely at time? Why? (*Probe for what times students feel lonely*)
11. Do students feel regulated by particular school and classroom practices?
12. Are there some students who have stopped school because of how things are done in

school or classroom? *(If yes, probe what happened)*

13. How do students feel when the teacher uses the same language as they do at home? Why?
14. What do students feel when the teacher uses a language they do not understand? What do they do?
15. How does the way students see themselves affect their aspirations about schooling?
16. What do students think should change in school which they feel powerless to change?

How are students negotiating their identities within the school?

- How are the students coping with every-day experiences within school and classroom?
- What do students do when they feel regulated by particular practices?
- What do students do when the teacher uses a language they do not understand?
- What do students do when a teacher is intimidating?
- What do students do when a student puts up an intimidating behaviour?
- What are the students' decisions about schooling?
- Would the students like to continue schooling if practices remain unchanged and why?

Appendix 7

Offences and recommended punishments in Unified code of Conduct

Appendix 2

Unified Code of Discipline for Basic Education Schools

Preface

1. This code of discipline presupposes that every school has some code of conduct spelt out in detail and indicating the sort of conduct expected of every pupil in Basic Education Schools in the country. It is this code of conduct that this unified code of discipline sets out to support and enforce.
2. The code of discipline is based on the principle that punishment is to reform. However, the punishment should be severe enough to act as a deterrent to others.
3. The purpose of this code is not to prescribe for every offence committed but to provide a guide on the disciplinary measures that may deter pupils from committing offences and compel them to exercise self-control and self-discipline in their day-to-day activities. It may also serve as a guide to heads in applying limits of sanctions, in addition to the humane approach they are expected to adopt in all matters relating to discipline in school.
4. The policy of setting up of School Management Committees should be adhered to by all Heads of Basic Education Schools. It is hoped that the Management Committee together with the school prefects will assist in maintaining the desired discipline in the school.
5. Above all, the co-operation of all members of staff is very much desired and every effort must be made to cultivate mutual trust among the head, staff and pupils.

6. It is expected that experience, tact and firmness of the head of the school will be brought to bear on all decisions.
7. Heads must ensure that all cases of indiscipline are thoroughly investigated by their Welfare Officers/Class Teachers. In all investigations, pupils must be given a fair hearing. *but not done in a*
8. Cases which, in the opinion of the school authorities, merit withdrawal should be referred to the District Education Officer's Welfare Unit. All such cases should be incorporated in the District Education Officer's quarterly report sent through the Regional Director to the Director-General.
9. All heads should adhere to procedures regarding suspensions and withdrawals.
10. Dismissals are not permissible in Basic Education Schools since all children should complete the mandatory 9 years basic education.

Suggested punishment for offences

OFFENCE	OCCUR- RENCE	RECOMMENDED PUNISHMENT
1. Habitual lateness	1st	Warning.
	2nd	Refer to Welfare Officer/Class Teacher to investigate and counsel.
	3rd	Withdrawing privileges, i.e. restraining a pupil from attending a school social activity.
2. Absenteeism/truancy/leaving school under false pretence	1st	Warning.
	2nd	Refer to Welfare Officer/Teacher to investigate and counsel.
	3rd	Assign some responsibility/change of school.
3. Littering on school compound	1st	Tidying or clearing of area littered.
	2nd	Give groundwork eg. scrubbing verandas, toilets, etc.
	3rd	Planting of grass, flowers, trees on school compound and tending for one year.
4. Tale-bearing/telling lies	1st	Warning and rendering an apology to those offended.
	2nd	Strong warning and rendering an apology - record in the disciplinary book.
	3rd	Refer to welfare Officer/Class Teacher to investigate and counsel.

OFFENCE	OCCUR- RENCE	RECOMMENDED PUNISHMENT
5. Fighting	1st 2nd 3rd	Strong warning. Caning. Groundwork.
6. Quarrelling/ Teasing	1st 2nd 3rd	Warning. Caning. Groundwork.
7. Stealing	1st 2nd 3rd	Strong warning accompanied by return or replacement of the stolen item. Caning - replacement of the stolen item. Ground work - replacement of the stolen item. Refer the pupil to the Welfare Officer for investigation and counselling.
8. Squandering of school fees	1st 2nd 3rd	Counsel and report conduct to parents. Parents to be counselled to pay fees themselves. Give child groundwork. Caning - Report child to Welfare Officer.
9. Illicit use of drugs including drinking alcohol and smoking	1st 2nd 3rd	Strong warning - Refer to the Welfare Officer/Class Teacher to investigate and counsel. Caning. Suspension.

OFFENCE	OCCUR- RENCE	RECOMMENDED PUNISHMENT
10. Flouting authority	1st	Rebuke in front of class/or at school assembly. Pupil to apologise and later carry out the assignment he refused to do.
	2nd	Caning.
	3rd	Suspension - Withdrawal in the case of support from parents.
11. Assault on colleague	1st	Warning.
	2nd	Caning.
	3rd	Suspension.
12. Assault on staff	1st	Strong warning/groundwork.
	2nd	Suspension/caning.
	3rd	Withdrawal.
13. Sexual misconduct	1st	Caning and suspension.
	2nd	Withdrawal.
14. Pregnancy/ Termination of Pregnancy	1st	Withdrawal and transfer.
15. Boycott of examination	1st	Strong warning.
	2nd	To be made to take the examination papers.
16. Failure to do homework	1st	Detention (during pupil's leisure time) to do extra work.
	2nd	Refer to Welfare Officer/class Teacher to investigate and counsel.

OFFENCE	OCCUR- RENCE	RECOMMENDED PUNISHMENT
17. Leaving school without permission	1st 2nd	Warning. Give class exercise or groundwork during leisure hours. Bar pupil from school social activities for a period.
18. Misuse/loss of school property	1st	Warning and replacement of lost item.

N.B.

- Under normal circumstances, suspension should not exceed 5 days and should be applied to Junior Secondary School pupils only.
- Cases of suspension should be brought to the notice of the parents/guardians of the pupils concerned.
- Caning should not exceed 4 strokes and must be administered by the Headmaster/mistress or under his/her supervision and recorded.
- Sanctions should in all cases be appropriate to the age of the pupil and the misdemeanour involved.
- In order that children do not develop aversion to farming/gardening, this type of punishment should be used as sparingly as possible.
- Notwithstanding the above guidelines each case should be considered on its own merit.
- Prizes/rewards should be given to pupils to encourage good behaviour in the school.

Appendix 8

RME Examination Question

END OF THIRD TERM EXAMINATION
SUBJECT: RELIGIOUS & MORAL EDUCATION.

NAMECLASS 3

SECTION A.

1. Whom did God promised a son? (a) Solomon (b) Abraham (c) David
2. Where did God send Moses to? (a) Egypt (b) Canaan (c) Iserael
3. Who was made the wisest man ever? (a) David (b) Abraham (c) Solomon
4. Who was the son of Abraham? (a) David (b) Solomon (c) Isaac
5. Who did God speak to at night? (a) Samuel (b) Solomon (c) David
6. Responsibilities means what you are supposed to do? (a) True (b) False
7. How many types of families do we have? (a) 3 (b) 2 (c) 4
8. Who is your cousine? (a) Aunt (b) Parents (c) Children
9. Allthe following are teachings in the bible except? (a) Prayer (b) Hard work and love (c) Hatred
10. Oral traditions are mostly used by christians? (a) True (b) False
11. What is a reward? (a) Is anything received from doing good (b) Is what we do from doing bad (c) Is giving money to people.
12. When we do good things, we receive? (a) Sickness (b) Rewards (C) Purnishment
13. The bible says children who obey their parents will have.....?
(a) Riches (b) Reward (c) Long life
14. The works that Jesus came to do on earth were believed to be
(a) Evils (b) Miracles (C) Rewards
15. The man Jesus rose from death was called..... (a) Peter (b) John (c) Lazarus
16. How many discciples did Jesus call? (a) 12 (b) 10 (c) 6
17. On what did Jesus died (a) a tree (b) a cross (c) ground
18. Which christian festival is used to remember the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem?
(a) Easter (b) Palm Sunday (c) Christmas
19. Christians believe that Jesus was born on?
(a) 25 December (b) 26 December (c) 27 December
20. Jesus turn water into (a) sea (b) blood (c) wine

SECTION B

Answer all questions:

1. What are responsibilities?

2. Mention two peoples God promised in the bible?

(i)

(ii)

3. State two things expected from good boys and girls?

(i)

(ii)

4. What is a reward?

5(a) State two things created by God?

(i)

(ii)

(b) State two things created by man?

(i)

(ii)

Appendix 9

Reports on Fieldwork

Initial report on Fieldwork

What I have been observing:

- Formal aspects of school life
 - pedagogic and classroom practices
 - application of rules and regulations
 - formal classifications/categorisations within the school
- Informal aspects of school life
 - Stories, myths and symbolisms in the school
 - duties, rituals and routine processes/practices
- Institutional relations and identities
 - interrelationships as entry points for expressions of power
 - processes of exclusion and inclusion in the school
 - school discipline and discursive violence

Main focus of interviews:

- children's accounts of schooling interactions and experiences
- how regulatory processes of school life influence the development of identities
- likes and dislikes about the school curriculum 'as intended', 'as experienced' and 'as internalised' versus what students want (the curriculum of the future)

Some Key learnings:

So far I can find different complexities, polarities and dilemmas within schooling relations which infantilises children (the students). Those include:

- words/expressions such as *Hey¹⁰, keep quiet, shut up, when you go to class pin your bottom to the chair, even when a snake bites you make sure you do not talk, if you fool I will cane you*, and informal mechanisms (age relations, hissing and bullying: both verbal and physical) are used to regulate students in the school.
- The younger age group (lower classes) have less quality instructional time, materials and infrastructure: Kindergarten classes have poor infrastructure, non-professional teachers and students in the Upper Primary classes are sent to teach these children when the class teachers are absent from school.
- Caning is the common form of discipline and students feel powerless to challenge it.
- Daily school practices, school duties and inter-positionings are gendered (E.g. the shortest boy is always taller than the tallest girl during morning Assembly when the teachers demand that the students line-up according to the rules of "shortest in front";

¹⁰ Hey, is an expression used in Ghana as a 'name' for people without any status or strangers. Actual usage connotes subservience of the subject of the expression.

- Students in P4 spent three days without learning but were required to not make 'noise' (I don't feel happy when we don't learn anything but the teachers will cane you if you don't come to school).
- An examinable subject, Information and Communication Technology was never taught at all "We never learnt ICT". However, Religious and Moral Education which was removed from the curriculum during the Education Reforms Review in 2007 is taught and examined from Christian perspectives.
- classrooms are regimented even at KG level and school time table requirements such as Morning Assembly are used to check attendance and to regulate behaviour within the school
- Students' silences as 'voice' expressed in relations with other interlocutors including myself as-a-researcher (will prefer to not talk about negative attitudes of teachers).
- students voice is silenced in the curriculum (students are not involved in any planning in the school, teachers controlled learning environments, students simply obey orders, class prefects i.e. student representatives are appointed by teachers)
- the students' images about teachers (teachers know everything) and the school (if my parents have money I will not be in this school)
- Class register is used to check attendance such that students believe their attendance is checked even when it is not marked
- Epistemological gap between students preferred learning approaches and teachers classroom philosophy or pedagogical approaches (teachers only talk, talk and give you assignment; teachers don't involve us in lessons; we don't do practicals!).
- the students have beliefs about themselves and their preferred role as learners and images of powerlessness (you cannot disagree with the teachers).
- the students have descriptive myths and beliefs about schooling (e.g. schooling is not for everyone; it is a waste of time; not interesting; not a happy place; you work for teachers on their private farms even during weekends; you sit in class without learning anything useful; a place where teachers call you 'hey' all the time; children being asked to teach KG classes while their own colleagues are learning etc).

Ethical dilemmas:

I have personal dilemmas standing to watch and feeling powerless, as some teachers administer corporal punishment. In such moments, I have difficulty in negotiating my personal beliefs in challenging the abuse of children and my professional roles and responsibilities as a researcher. I feel that privileging students' voices involves making children visible, which requires securing their protection: challenging abuses, ensuring that children know their rights, are encouraged to express them and are given vital life skills and information to protect themselves from abuse and exploitation. So, I feel I am failing to protect the best interest of the children at moments when I stand watching teachers administer corporal punishment.

- The school head has expectations of me to help identify what I may see or what students may 'report' to me as problems within the school. Often the school head will say "please, let me know if you see anything that does not meet expected standards so that we can correct it". I had to be clear continually about my role as a researcher and my commitment to confidentiality and anonymity. At the same time I needed to assure the head that I am not secretly finding faults about the school or leadership practices.
- Students are expecting me as an outsider whom the teachers respect to be their voice against abuse of children within the school. All the participants in one group interview shouted "YES" when one said, "Sir, please talk to our teachers to stop caning us anyhow"
- I am currently perplexed about how to report the work in-depth or how to describe the study school because of the possibility that potential readers in the study school may attribute voice to certain individuals. Also, I am becoming increasingly aware that that my description of the study school may lead people with good knowledge about schools in the Effutu Municipality to identify the particular school.
- The decision on the setting and timing for (and of) interviews interfaces with my commitments to be careful about how often I interrupt or disrupt daily life in the school. I have been careful that my data collection process does not become a barrier to teaching and learning. This is practically affecting issues such as how many interview sessions, time of holding interviews, where to hold interviews with whom and for how long. Also, I am constantly negotiating the balance between privacy so that participants can feel at ease and my commitment that the interview sessions will NOT be held in any secluded environment that will look suspicious to other members of the school.

Key surprises:

- School duties are not assigned based on class or grade levels of students.
- The school head has expectations of me, as a student in a Western society, to search for philanthropic support to build classrooms for the Kindergarten classes.
- Significant others (teachers and school head) raised very strong post-colonial arguments about the education system in Ghana. A teacher said, "You (researchers) are always researching but never questioning the colonial roots of why education seem to be so irrelevant to our national needs". The school head asked me, "So what will your research change about our present education system, which is still following the colonial system with strong emphasis on only literacy and numeracy and not skill development. I believe you are aware that the colonial people emphasised those aspects because they needed only clerical staff to support their own skilled people but we as a

nation need skilled labour force, the engineers, the entrepreneurs, the Bill gates etc”.

- I am intrigued by students perception of curriculum (E.g. “Sir, we need subjects that help us to know our community!”, “Please Sir, some of the subjects are not useful to us. Why can’t we learn about agriculture?”¹¹
- Teachers were vehemently opposed to repetition but have to do so because education administrators accuse their schools as non-performing schools (“We have repeated some three students in Primary Six for three years. Now one has dropped because but the JHS head says he cannot accept them because the District People (District Education Officials) accuse them [head teachers] of non-performance if those children progress and fail”.

Methodological issues/shifts

- I need to interview some significant others (teachers and school head) to understand the context of certain practices (e.g. why caning is the main form of punishment in the school. From such I have realised that it is critical for me to do some analysis of documents such as the *Headteachers’ Handbook* for Ghanaian Basic Schools to understand the context of some processes and practices in the school)
- Sometimes (when the teacher is not around) I use the whole class for Consensual Focus Group Discussions (CFGD) in order to understand the relation dynamics among the students in that Class.
- I am using observation as the main tool and then crosschecking the data during interviews. This has helped in fine-tuning my interview questions to prevent situations where the students were initially giving socially desirable responses.

¹¹ Agriculture has been removed from the pre-university school curriculum and replaced with integrated science which combines natural and physical sciences.

Final Report on fieldwork April 2011 – January 2012

1.0 Introduction

This report covers the processes and period of fieldwork (24 April to 23 May, 2011). It highlights issues around access to the field, access at the research sites and participants, and the process of data collection. The report also presents some lessons from the experience of the fieldwork.

2.0 Access and Data Collection at the District Education Office (24 April–23 May, 2011)

A letter requesting permission to conduct fieldwork was submitted to **xxx**¹² education Directorate of Education on 24 April, 2012. A written permission was granted after one month in a letter dated 23 May, 2011 which I received in person. Data collection started on the same day as I took records (District Education Performance Report (2010) and Annual School Census Data for 2011) from the District Statistics Office School to aid in the selection a school. The period of school selection lasted for a period of four days (23-26 May, 2011) as I took time to analyse the records and visit schools. The District Education Performance Report (2010) noted

low enrolment of girls as against boys' enrolment between 2006/07 and 2009/10 academic years except 2010/11. However, there is low participation of girls in primary education in **xxx** circuit. Most ... [Students] in this circuit came from rural and/or beach communities where fishing and farming activities are predominant; ...[i]t seems there is a phenomenon of downward trend in enrolment in the upper primary classes ... a significant number of pupils who enroll in primary 1 in public schools do not complete primary education. This may be due to increase in drop out, repetition or transfer-out of the pupils. Child labour and child neglect account for drop-out rate of pupils graduating to various levels. Efforts must be made to trap such children and encourage them to go back to school [as] 1.2 % (50) of KG pupils dropped out in 2009/10 academic year.

Form the analysis of the Annual School Census Data (2011) I noticed that one (1) of the four (4) rural schools defy the characteristics of low enrolment of girls than boys. I selected this school because, although sex-fixed gender analysis is not the specific focus of my work, I am generally interested in the experiences of those who stay in school and how they are negotiating the existential conditions.

3.0 Negotiating Access in the Study School (23 May, 2011 – 16 January, 2012)

I considered the entire period from 23 May, 2011 to 16 January, 2012 as a time of negotiating access because I had to continuously adjust my agenda for data collection to day-by-day consent/assent from structural regulatory processes and individual agency of participants within the school throughout the period of data collection.

The headteacher gave verbal approval,

Mr Mensah, you are welcome to do your research here. I don't have a problem. We are all interested in what will improve education in this country as the director's letter is saying (referring to copy of the clearance letter from the

¹² XXX is used to anonymise the name of district, circuit and school where the research was carried out.

district office). And from your letter (referring to Consent Form) I can see you are interested in the good of this country. Let me call my teachers to inform them and you can explain to them further...

Later the teachers gave verbal approval and one noted,

I can tell you that researchers come here all the time. We have no opposition to research as you see from the comments of my colleagues because it helps everyone. Please, let us know if there is any way we can support you. I think you just have to inform the head if you think there anything we can do to help you.

Verbal consent/assent from participants (15 students aged 11-15 although actual school age in documents end at 13) after two weeks of observation and longitudinal analysis of school register for students in Primary 4 , 5 and 6 to select students who have stayed in the school since enrolment in Primary 1.

4.0 Data Collection and Sources of the Data Gathered

The data was gathered using Institutional Ethnographic tools (documents review, interviews and personal observations).

A. Documents

Documents were reviewed to gather data on the school characteristics (members – numbers of students and teachers, age characteristics, gender parity index etc) and written regulatory policies. The documents studied were:

- **School census data** from District Education Office to analyse enrolment and student characteristics
- **Class register** to select the critical case sample of 15 students
- **School Log book** from school head for data on **teacher characteristics**
- **School time table** for regulation of schooltime
- **Headteachers Handbook** and the **Unified Code of Discipline for Basic Education Schools** for how policy texts constituted externally bring power to the school in defining ruling relations (regulatory practices within bureaucratic administration of the school including the prefectorial system, rules and rituals to extended social relations) and how dominant institutional culture is mediated by texts and documents

B. Interviews and observation

Observations and interviews were conducted for 33 weeks in the following specific form

- 4 days of observation per week with one day off (the day-off was random) for general observations while visiting the school at different times of the day (very early before everyone else for whole day or during assembly time, at break time, at worship time, closing time) to see how things get done including when everyone is **Not** expecting me.

- 1 week break after every 4 weeks to avoid becoming personally routinized and to reflect on the data
- 12 regular class observations (teachers and students were previously aware) and five (9) informal class observations (while sitting or walking along the corridor)
- 7 focus group discussions (one per month because of ethical concerns around using students during contact hours) – use of special periods, pre-classroom experiences, classroom experiences, school discipline, imageries of schooling, why continue schooling despite regulation
- 30 one-one interviews (2 for each member of the Critical case sample)
- 3 special one-on-one interviews (disable student + P2 girl who refuses a teacher's command to get me a seat + P3 girl who has been demoted to KG)
- 15 whole class interactions with students in particular grade levels when class teacher is absent
- Occasional engagements with teachers for the purposes of confirming some data from interviews.
- Sometimes spending time with teachers having informal conversations about school, the education system, the students and teacher professional identity (usually beliefs around coloniality in knowledge construction and disciplinary practices)
- Conversations with school head about the school system and sharing in the challenges facing headteachers
- Last day conversation with school head on discipline practise in the school

The observations and interviews centred on the following broad themes:

- Pre-classroom activities and duties (bringing gravels to school, sweeping classrooms and teachers homes, tidying the compound etc).
- Rules, rituals (assembly and school worship) routines
- Classroom experiences
- Experiences during special periods (breaktime, library period and Physical Education period)
- Disciplinary processes and practices (eg. prefects writing names for teachers to cane, feelings about caning)
- Relationships (Teacher-student and student-student relationships)
- Students images of school (eg Likes and dislikes, school relations and identities)

5.0 Some highlights from *Initial reflections on the data*

Being student as a way of becoming through insertion in institutionalised daily regulation (expectations and performances, infantilisation in knowledge construction)

Institutionalised surveillance and control through discrimination and Classifications based on gender, age, status (prefects, teachers, seniors, juniors) religion, fluency in English language etc

Students' Images of school (e.g. a place of harassment and bullying by teachers and colleagues, powerlessness, non-relevant curriculum and performativity) seem to have implications future decisions

6.0 Some Lessons from the fieldwork

- Ethics of using contact hours for data collection versus using out-of-school hours for data collection.
- Coming in contact with practices and students' accounts that challenge the colonising effects of my own beliefs and assumptions about schooling (e.g. as a Christian I have helped to rigidly enforce the observance of religious values in the period I served as a Basic School teacher in Ghana).
- Challenges personal assumptions about theory and methodology (e.g. adoption of institutional ethnography during fieldwork to facilitate the analysis of complexity) enriching my process of 'becoming' a researcher.
- Offers opportunity to engage with 'reality', exposing new facts through contact with 'real' situations in the research context (e.g. agency as only a form of passive opposition and resistance).
- Long dialogic period of data collection is useful in exposing previously unknowns and the effects of taken for granted practices.